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BY THE WAY OF
THE GATE - HOUSE
AND BY WAY - IN
CHARLES CASTER

BY THE WAY OF THE GATE

VOLUME ONE

BY THE WAY OF
THE GATE: POEMS
AND DRAMAS :: By
CHARLES CAYZER

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME ONE

LONDON : KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH
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BY THE WAY OF
THE GREAT PORT
AND THE GREAT
HARBOR OF LONDON

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*Afterward he brought me to the gate,
even the gate that looketh toward the east :*

*And, behold, the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the east : and
his voice was like a noise of many waters :
and the earth shined with his glory.*

* * *

*And the glory of the Lord came into
the house by the way of the gate whose
prospect is toward the east.*

*So the spirit took me up, and brought
me into the inner court ; and, behold, th
glory of the Lord filled the house.*

*And I heard one speaking unto me
out of the house ; and the man stood by
me.*

EZEKIEL xliii. 1-6.

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TO
MY WIFE

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AD ASTRA

THE JOURNAL OF

AD ASTRA

4. 4. 4. 4. 4. 4.

AD ASTRA

OR

THE QUEST OF EDEN

I

THE leaves are falling fast, and Winter drear

With muffled feet steals on the silent fold ;

With marble touch his hoary hand doth sear

The very heart-strings of the poor and old ;

The little songsters of the leafy wold

Are quiet now, no more to charm the sky

With rapture of a love that cannot die.

II

All things must die, all things must have an end

That tell of a beginning and a birth,

All things must die, and soon or late must lend

Their little meed of dust to swell the earth,

But Love came with us in our baby mirth,

Love grew beside us, taught us how to smile,

And Love will guide us thro' Death's dark defile.

III

O gentle Love ! sooth whisperer to mankind,
Whom every voice in Nature doth extol,
Divinest of the mysteries enshrined
Within the temple of the human soul,
Thy sovran power no mortal may control !
Whose mystic arms encircle land and sea,
Cradling the great deeps of Eternity.

IV

Love is an union sweet of eyes and heart,
Each bound in willing service to the other,
The glancing eyes do first their joy impart,
Then silent tears give answer for their brother ;
Bright jewell'd founts wherein we fain would smother
The weakness and the rapture of our love,
Forgetful that the gift is from above !

V

O hallow'd Love ! whose fruits were ever tears—

The soft unfolding of the bud in Spring,

The glittering pageantry which Summer rears,

And Autumn's glories trail'd on russet wing

To the foregrieving heart the closelier cling,

Because their loveliness must pass away,

Because their beauty is but for a day.

VI

Thus do we nourish in our breasts the sting

Of joys that are too exquisite to last,

We fain would keep the heart a-sorrowing

And wistfully bemoan the sunlit past,

Regardless that the hours are fleeting fast.

While this To-day, in which we fume and fret,

To-morrow will be part of our regret !

VII

So thro' the change of days, when Winter hoar
Doth wrestle with his brother for the crown,
When to the clash of elements at war
Autumnal dirges are around us blown,
What wonder if the heart some sadness own
Amid the tempest and its bitter mirth,
The mocking winds that desolate the earth !

VIII

Can Nature still the craving of the Soul ?
Can Nature quell the tumult of the mind ?
Can Nature teach us calm and brave control ?
Can Nature bring us nearer to our kind ?
In part she may—if in her face we find
The smile, long sought for 'mid elusive loves,
That stirs the spirit and unto healing moves.

IX

That answering smile that seems to set at rest
Long days of passion and dread nights of pain—
At last to lay the head against her breast
And find security from storm and strain,
In close enfoldment like a child again,—
The peace that broods upon the Protean deep
When the unruly winds are hush'd in sleep.

X

Needs must we suffer first to find her fair!
Nature was ever yet a second love!
Heart-broken and in deep bondage of despair,
Still cherishing the chains which Eros wove,
She mutely chides us wheresoe'er we rove—
How tenderly, yet by how sure degrees,
She lures us to her own most gentle knees.

XI

Ah, lightning interchange of soul and sense !
Divine communion with a kindred frame—
When spirit voices call from out the immense,
Unfathomable Silence whence we came,
And Man's immortal destiny proclaim—
What time we breathe a far serener air
And reach at joys that are beyond our sphere.

XII

She weaves around us widening sympathies,
Knowledge to measure all her variant moods—
If we but love her for herself, we rise
To higher levels in her solitudes—
Amid the healing silence of the woods
We can forgive the pettiness, the wrong,
The coward spite of many an evil tongue.

XIII

A many temples hath she set apart
That all her children may in freedom share
The exultation and uplift of heart
Of her vast sanctuaries of light and air,
Of her lone peaks of silence and of prayer,—
Of life, so rarely wrought in great or small,
Of Love, supreme High Priest and Lord of all.

XIV

But have we never found her kinship vain,
Ere yet the struggling will hath been resign'd?
Her cold indifference to mortal pain!
The riddle of her heart, how hard to find!
Capricious, and to fitful moods inclined!—
She smiles, she seems to mock us in our sorrow,
And just as lightly will she weep to-morrow!

xv

When Life seems valueless, the future void,
Her garish contrasts are too harsh to bear—
Nature in field and forest is o'erjoy'd,
While we, poor outcasts, unbefriended fare.
What doth our unregardant Mother care?
Like some proud dame, whom social pleasures crown,
She scants her offspring for her latest gown!

xvi

Nature is like a woman greatly loved,
Robed in the glint and glamour of Romance;
So long as all her charms are yet unproved,
She holds the soul enwapt in starry trance—
Her beauty deals the death-wound at a glance!
Dare we but gaze deep in those splendid eyes,
No answering love-light to our own replies!

XVII

Our love it was that gave the mystic grace,
And robed her in the splendour of the sun ;
Our love it was that carved upon her face
The witching lines whereby we were undone ;
That set her on her interstellar throne !
But soon or late our love must wake, and then—
Love unrequited makes us faithless men !

XVIII

While she looks on with cold indifference
Behind the granite of her rugged brows,
Our little loves to her are but pretence,
And held as light as are all lovers' vows—
She hoods herself in her eternal snows,
A stately Presence, with an icy mien.
Ah, bold his heart who crowns her deathless Queen !

XIX

Love, at the highest, asks for no reward,
For perfect Love rejects all recompense ;
So that of his own fires he may keep guard,
To fuller vantage makes he no pretence,—
His altars breathe of myrrh and frankincense,—
Fill'd with the joy of such high sacrifice,
He swings his burning thurible of spice.

XX

And so our love for Nature is not vain,
But doth return to enrich our hearts the more :
Whate'er we give, she gives us back again
With swift unfoldings from her golden store—
With larger knowledge of ourselves we pore
Upon the book her Mother-heart makes known
—To find her chastenings are with love o'erstrewn.

XXI

And of her grace she bids us worthy be,
Our portion of the wide earth-sorrow bear.
While she doth heighten Love's affinity
With bonds the sweetest that the stars declare.
Whom she hath join'd the Quest of Eden share,
Their friendship grows with each accrescent moon,
And silvern Death o'ertakes them all too soon.

XXII

O beauteous World of Wonder and Romance !
God's Light behind thin veils of mystery !
Some moments of our lives thou dost enhance,
—Oft as the trammell'd soul thou settest free.
We feel so conscious of our part in thee,
The spirit leaps toward her native skies,
Doubt and Despair fall from her as she flies.

XXIII

Nature ! thy grandeur awes the ignoblest mind,
But half thy charms were inarticulate,
Soulless, till Woman's grace thy grace enshrined.
She first in Man soft pity did create
And tenderness for all things, small and great.
Through her awakening, Man hath learnt to share
The bright perceptions which first dwelt in her !

XXIV

The day of Chivalry can never die
So long as Woman seeks her rightful reign !
By far the loveliest thing beneath the sky,
The sceptre of the heart she wields amain !
Then let her never of her lot complain !
She so can sanction, in her time and place,
That with her rests the future of the race.

XXV

And nowhere shines her presence so supreme
As in the halls by Nature deck'd for her—
'Mid mountain scenery and forest gleam
She stands confest the Queen of all things there,
How delicately fashion'd, and how fair!
With gentle lustre beaming from her eye
She fills with radiance earth and sea and sky.

XXVI

Nature and Love are sisters that allied
Each shows the other still more wondrous fair.
If thou wouldst learn of Love, look on thy bride
When moonlight steeps her lips and lustrous hair,
And chiming Ocean doth her sweet heart stir,
Or 'neath the shadow of some piny steep
When the great sun dies out upon the deep.

XXVII

For what is Nature with no comrade by
 To share the fervour of the heart's excess,
 To show with ministry of hand and eye
 That joy is doubled by a like impress?
 Beloved Companionship! which grows not less
 By mutual service, sympathy divine,
 The worship of twin souls at Nature's shrine.

* * * * *

XXVIII

O Nature, lovely charmer, gentle bride !
Thy golden days draw to a tragic end !
The encroaching millions overwhelm thee like a tide—
A desecration and a doom impend
Where sylvan vales now fold on fold extend
In widening prospect 'neath the unsullied sky
Until in dreamy tracts of blue they die.

XXIX

O heavy day for all who follow after,
To think what our dear England may become !
Where Peace now reigns shall flow discordant laughter,
And witless mirth where nightingales are dumb !—
No more for us the beetle's drowsy hum
Shall break the stillness of the Summer night
And to the scents of eve add new delight.

XXX

No more,—yet have we not divine amends ?

Wider horizons for the human mind ?

Woman, no more the slave for meaner ends ?

But as companion of the soul design'd !

Her influence breathing, like a gentle wind,

Health and a quiet calm to stormy seas—

Peace after tempest, after turmoil ease.

XXXI

And Man—to what achievements doth he move ?

Who shall his godward march or end descry ?

Out of the earth what untold treasure-trove ?

What realms await him in the trackless sky ?

The storéd lightnings at his bidding fly,

The circuits of the World their bounds decrease

Before the smile of Universal Peace.

XXXII

Tho' factory smoke and film of whirring loom
 Becloud the scene and Man's far vision foil,
Time will obliterate, and deep entomb
 These pristine methods of primeval toil.
His latter day shall yield him richer spoil,
Bought with a lesser strain of eye and nerve,
And Nature's harness'd powers his will subserve.

XXXIII

Then Cities shall arise, both sweet and fair,
 In purer regions of the untrammell'd sky,
No murky fumes pollute the healing air
 Where sunny streets in widening prospect vie.
Of sickness and disease shall no man die !
A happier race in happier climes will prove
Health the handmaid of Peace and child of Love.

XXXIV

Then let the Future cradle what it may,
It cannot so the Mind invalidate
That Man would let her Queendom pass away,
And Nature's beauty be determinate.
She who reveals with mother-heart elate
The daily need of this our little life—
Who lives for God, feareth no wind of strife.

* * * * *

XXXV

O Nature, tho' thy beauty never wanes,
And every hour sets forth some new device
To captivate Man's heart, and hold in chains
His fond imagination—still thou art ice
To his affection, like a maid's caprice !
But never, like a maid, dost give thy love,
And all the stings of doubt at last remove.

XXXVI

In Love's great heights and depths thou canst not
share !—
Love's widening coil of reciprocity !—
In that brief moment when two lives declare
That Life is richer than all dreams can be,
What time the mellow'd fruit falls from the tree,
Reaping the harvest of the heart's desire
In one all-perfect joy, too soon to expire !

XXXVII

‘ O little hands and feet ! O Heart of mine !
Why linger listless in thy father’s hall ?
Why tarriest thou in that far home of thine,
Unwitting that I love thee all in all ?
Hast never on the midnight heard my call ?
What tho’ mine eyes have never own’d thee fair,
Thy heart is mine, and Beauty dwelleth there !

XXXVIII

‘ O Ladye mine, I seek thee thro’ the World,
In every forest depth I feel thee stir,
In flush of sunsets, or in clouds upcurl’d,
In every sigh susurrant on the air.
For thee Dame Nature doth her magic wear,
The tender flowers their yearly grace renew,
The lark soars, choiring in the uncharted blue.

XXXIX

' O thou, who somewhere braidest billowy gold,
Looking upon thyself with lowly eyes,
When in thy glass thy dawning charms unfold
At morn and eve their maiden mysteries,
As half unconscious where thy sweetness lies !
Like some white, slender lily of the wood,
That never knew how graciously she stood !

XL

' Judge from *thy* heart, how much I long for thee !
Here hate breeds strife and wrong, and wrong—
despair.
The World, more pitiless than Death can be,
Breaks on the rack all those who greatly dare,
Who fearlessly have striven to keep life fair.
Fain would my spirit fold tired wings and rest,
Pillow'd upon the surge of thy soft breast.

XLI

‘ What hope have I, if Love light not the way ?
O whither should my weary footsteps bend ?
How few there are to whom a man may say
All that he feels, as fellow unto friend !
How little may the mask of smiles portend !
“ Give of thy best, give even unto thy last ”—
I gave—and scorn remembrance of the past !

XLII

‘ Yet who so poor he may not boast of friends ?
Who hath not in his heart some radiance stored ?
E’en tho’ we know how lightly friendship ends,
When but a breath can make the name abhorr’d !
E’en tho’ the parting cleaveth like a sword,
We are fain to love, and be again bereaven,
Perchance to find at last the peace of even !

XLIII

‘ And oft, at evening, passing thro’ the town,
Ere yet the ruddy lights their lantern’d play
Have half begun, when every little frown
Is faintly mirror’d in the dying day,
And maidens’ eyes with that fair light of May
Are crystal-clear, as to their homes repair
The dainty almoners of dainty fare,

XLIV

‘ How have I sigh’d, to think of my return !—
No eye will light with kindlier fire for me,
No heart will bide my coming, till it burn
At every sound of Love’s expectancy,
No ear alert Love’s Messenger to be.—
All desolate and drear my lonely room ;
Deepens my grief amid the enshrouding gloom.

XLV

‘ And shall I cry for ever, and in vain ?

The night-winds mock me with their hollow sighs,
And daylight chills me by her cold disdain—

The daughters of the Morn with dew-wash’d eyes
As unresponsive as the silent skies !—

On every hand I see that Love is fair,
And every gleam augmenteth my despair !

XLVI

‘ How I could love, if loved in like degree !

What service can to this rich quest compare ?
To sail beyond the sunsets, and to see

Those Western Isles that all have deem’d so fair,
To breathe awhile in that diviner air,

Love’s coronal upon the brow of life,
Love’s kingdom won, Love’s throne secure from strife !

XLVII

'O Love! that sitt'st upon thy deathless throne,
Controlling all by thine Omnipotence—
O Heart! that deem'st thou canst not love, since none
Can give thee back thy heart's full recompense—
O Love for Love! divinest Affluence!
To read thy longing in another's eyes
—Ah! once like this did Dawn in Eden rise!'

* * * * *

XLVIII

‘ One have I met—O radiant memory !—
For whose dear friendship not in vain I sued,
Whose spirit’s mute appeal first spoke to me
Of Woman’s sweet, enduring fortitude,
Of sorrow never sanction’d to intrude,—
With every breath her gentle spirit drew
Man revered all womankind anew.



XLIX

‘ The tender, wistful smile that spoke of life
Nursing a hope nourish’d upon despair ;
The struggle of a soul whose inward strife
Seem’d hourly more than its frail shell could bear—
O what a treasury of love was there !—
A richer mine man never found on earth,
Yet stored for one unconscious of its worth !

L

‘ So now I wait, if haply I may find
A maid that shall some fleet resemblance bear
To Her, who all unconsciously did bind
Me to herself with many a silken snare—
Have I not seen her smile when none was near?
Those sorrowing lips, what could they tell of love?
They told of depths *I* would have died to prove !

LI

‘ Blooms there for me a white and petal’d flower
Wherein my soul might fold its wings and rest?
Heart-weariness doth hold me every hour,
I cannot quell the tumult of my breast !
Yet in the silence stands thy love confest—
I feel thy winnowing wings about my soul,
I dare not go beyond their mute control.

LII

‘ No outward sign I ask of Love’s awaking,
Love needs no tongue to syllable his plea ;
When once our eyes have met, all else forsaking,
Not death itself shall set our spirits free !
For each one hope, one language, there will be—
Our souls will meet in silence, and none hear
The swift response that maketh all things clear.

LIII

‘ Thou Star ! that shone upon me from a height
As wide and boundless as the spacious Heaven,
Filling my lonely soul with thy pure light
And that sweet peace that doth all passion leaven.
Bright beacon to my bark in tempest driven
Too nigh the perilous quicksands of Despair,
Which else had founder’d in the midnight bare !

LIV

‘ Be thou the guide and compass of my way !
Let thy true needle point me to the sky,
Where shines the light of never-ending day,
And passion’s surges roll unheeded by.
Dwell thou within my bosom till I die !
Purge and refine each thought unhallow’d there,
And make my heart a habitation fair.

LV

‘ Come to me, O my soul’s diviner soul !
Come, breathing balm as from celestial spheres,
Sweet woman, loved beyond my heart’s control !
For in thy bosom Love itself uprears
A City of Refuge from the ruthless years,
A Sanctuary of Rest for heart and brain,
A Shrine of Peace, close cancell’d from all pain.

LVI

‘ While in the mirror of thine own pure mind,
And in the foretaste of thy perfect love,
A nobler manhood I am fain to find,
A worthier steward I am sworn to prove,
Believing that our trials are from above,
Scorning revolt as treason to the race,
A patriot of the world by gift of grace.

LVII

‘ How long, dear Heart, how long must we repine ?
How many a day goes idly, vacant by,
Which should have link’d our souls in bonds divine,
Which should complete the life for which we sigh !
For what were all the bliss beneath the sky
If we might never, heart on heart, bestow
The impassion’d peace that only lovers know ?

LVIII

'Tis with the evening that I feel thy want,
 For with the light my sun of life goes down—
 How cold the Moon's pale fire ! how grim and gaunt
 The spectral arms about my casement blown !
 How wofully the winds of midnight moan !
 And I—tho' Love is hospiced everywhere—
 Have no sweet Love to comfort my despair !'

* * * * *

LIX

‘ I will away, into the light of day !
For herald morn blows on the hills afar,
I will away, and somewhere will I pray
For strength and guidance, that I may not mar
The life that still is left—my evil Star
Hath set ; another day dawns bright and clear,
The brighter for the clouds that hung so near.

LX

‘ Awake, my Love, the morn is newly drest !
Awake, and meet thy lover on the lea !
How cold and drear, till thou dost leave thy nest !
How bright the sunshine that awakes with thee !
For when thou goest abroad ’tis told to me—
The very winds are richer for thy sighs,
As from thy lips they take their sweet supplies.’

LXI

Such the first cry of Youth before it learns
That not for love alone was life assign'd,
Till painfully the growing Man discerns
That Youth is to Love's deeper meaning blind,
For passion oft betrays the unguarded mind,
And like the spangle of a lesser star
Dazzles, while Love glows steadfast from afar !

LXII

O Woman, with what soul-alluring charms
Thou dost constrain our wills to worship thee !
How may we fight against those fateful arms ?
How fly Love's all-apperilous archery ?
O had Man true discernment he might see
Thy love is but the mirage of a dream
Which mocks him with the magic of its gleam !

LXIII

When will he learn to look on thee aright,
Not make of thee an idol for a day?
Enthroned thee on a far serenest height,
Where spirits touch, yet mingle not with clay?
Thy beauty then will meet a purer ray,
And in the light of never-ending Love
A true heart-union and espousal prove.

LXIV

O Soul, which ever whisperest of thy wants,
In God alone canst thou be satisfied!
Insatiably man's earth-born nature pants
For Love, that never woman yet supplied!
For Love, that is to mortal years denied!—
O heart of man! why strive eternally
Against the Love which can alone set free?

LXV

How brief, how frail, the highest human love !

Yet constancy in love each mortal craves.

Unless thy trust in God knows no remove,

This life is but a sleep on summer waves—

Rough winds will toss thee to their ocean caves,

Thro' which the bellowing sea with thundrous roar

Doth break the chilly silence evermore.

* * * * *

LXVI

Unto the naked Heavens we cry aloud,
‘O Father, give us back our Childhood’s faith—
That Faith which sought Thee in the brightening cloud,
And deem’d it but the mirror of Thy breath—
O give us that assurance which in Death
Men have, whom lifelong fears and doubts assail’d
Yet at the last Thy glorious Light have hail’d!

LXVII

‘Oh, when our passionate hearts have ceased to beat,
Then only may we feel ourselves secure!
We are not fit to lay us at Thy feet,
Our wills relapse, our frailties endure.
O Lord, unless we felt Thy pardon sure,
Conscious of guilt, of charity denied,
How might we in Thy clemency confide?

LXVIII

‘ In sole reliance on Thy saving grace,
The Cross of Sacrifice which cleanseth sin,
Thy mercy and love as suppliants we embrace—
Here, at Thine altar, seek we peace within—
Lord, now in us Thy silent work begin !
O grant us true repentance of the past,
And Faith that shall not doubt Thee at the last !

LXIX

‘ O give us Love—strong, steadfast, undefiled !
A heart to sanctify our own heart’s need,
An eye that is not by new sights beguiled,
A mind ennobled by its human creed,
A soul that is from sensual slavery freed—
Or, if we may no true heart-union prove,
Grant us to know Thy Greater Heart of Love !

* * * * *

LXX

'Mid Nature's solitudes we needs must feel
How great the debt of happiness we owe
To those who share our lives, and seek our weal—
Companionship none lightly may forgo!—
For such as on themselves their love bestow
Carry, like all who hoard illiberal gold,
Burdens more sad than human hearts may hold.

LXXI

We cannot live without our fellow-men,
Nor hermit-like within the desert roam.—
Thrice vain for Man, that lonely denizen,
To shrink from those who share his earthly home!—
We must perforce to Man's high service come!
For we are members all one of another,
As bone knits bone, brother uniteth brother.

LXXII

And some there be—poor, self-deluded souls !

Who shackle life i' the Stoics' trammelling bands,
Believing that so far as each controls

His bent for pleasure, so the soul expands—

Such the pale creed Philosophy commands !

But those who bow to this inclement god

May find it break them with an iron rod !

LXXIII

Self is thy basic creed, Philosophy !

—To make the Will invulnerably whole,
To glory in Man, god of the years to be !

His Will that would all thought, all power control.

How frail a superstructure for the Soul !

Can that Intelligence which made the Will

No loftier sapience than this instil ?

LXXIV

These are thy first-fruits, O Philosophy !—
To shun delight and spurn the threat of pain,
To let no fear perturb that Faculty
—The Will, that shall advance the way of men,
To hold all promptings of the heart as vain.
Symbol of Symbols ! comes the Cross to prove
The key that shall unlock all worlds is Love !

LXXV

Only to hearts devoid of human feeling,
Only to natures cold as thy cold creed,
Can thy trite truths, Philosophy ! bring healing,
Can thy poor Faith bind up the wounds that bleed—
The soul is dead that is from suffering freed—
Philosophy would blunt the edge of pain,
Yet is more pitiless than wintry rain !

LXXVI

Why thro' vast æons was The Light delay'd?

Why was the knowledge of The Way denied?

Where was God's Loving-kindness, where His aid

In those dark ages of adulterous pride?

That He could in His peaceful Heaven abide

While sorrow and ancient pain on earth made moan,

And never a Wind of Grace blew from His throne!

LXXVII

We rate our little lives beyond their worth—

Time hath not taught us true humility.

What claim hath any child of mortal birth

That life should be from pain and dolour free?

To Immortality what right have we?—

Salvation is a favour, not a right,

For none are justified in God's clear sight.

LXXVIII

From distant æons was this earth ordain'd
For Man his habitation and his throne.
Guided by Nature, and by Love constrain'd,
The greatest minds the unransom'd world had known
The Pagan creeds had one by one outgrown.
Light grew apace. Lo ! streaming up the wind,
The vision of the Saviour of mankind.

LXXIX

To those exalted sons of Greece and Rome,
Whose fearless gaze was fix'd upon the sky,—
Who view'd the mirror'd heavens as Man's far home,
Held Death but as a friend that lingereth nigh
To still the throbbing brain, the tortured cry,—
We owe the first conception of our God :
They strew'd with palms the path which Jesus trod.

LXXX

And, if their hope and teaching were in vain—
Oh, not in vain their brave and eager Faith !
A Faith which might the noblest life sustain,
Which fail'd them not even with their fleeting
breath,
Calm in that all-attesting hour of Death,—
They follow'd where the Star of Morning led
Thro' darkling dawns to their immortal dead.

* * * * *

LXXXI

How stem this cry of universal pain
That wails from chasm and vault adown the years,
That moves to madness many a tortured brain,
That daunts the bravest with abysmal fears?
Is God more vengeful, more remote from tears,
Than man that is the creature of His breath?—
Shall Disobedience merit instant death?

LXXXII

We judge from our own standpoint—that of sin!
Transgressors, even our weightiest judgments err;
Whilst our awards and punishments begin
With Justice, which we but too oft defer,
With Laws, whose highest aim is to deter.
We may not judge the criminal intent,
Nor weigh the mind, its motive or its bent.

LXXXIII

But God!—can evil live within His sight?

Sinless, how must He view the wrack of sin?

Shall God be ruled by measure of our Right,

Be judged by that diviner Voice within

Whence all our thoughts of Holiness begin?—

Not of ourselves may we foretoken Heaven

But only through His grace, so freely given.

* * * * *

LXXXIV

LXXXIV

Why to the Jews?—Why to the Jews alone
The Sword of Eden flaming over Wrong?
Why should they be so sovranly His own,
Who made all men alike, both weak, and strong?
Why should His Righteousness to them belong?
Why was The Light not unto all ordain'd?
Why were the Gentiles in gross darkness chain'd?

LXXXV

If we would fathom His august decree,
And so determine His divine intent—
O that the mind of man should strive to see
Into that Great, Primæval Element,
The Spirit-force wherewith our lives are blent!—
Why should we doubt, and why should we despair,
Because we cannot reason all things clear?—

LXXXVI

Are not our lives girt round with mysteries
That mock the shadowy substance of our years ?
And shall we find our answer in the skies
That break as lightly as a maiden's tears ?
In Faith alone may we resolve our fears—
Infinite Wisdom wrought the Cosmic Whole,
And shall It not the least of life control ?

LXXXVII

'Tho' sore adread, O wherefore need we doubt
The wisdom and the justice of God's choice ?
His Kingdom was not 'stablisht from without,
But from within must come the still Small Voice !
No trampling legions bade the World rejoice,
'Jehovah hath prevail'd o'er all His foes !'
No Babylon amid the desert rose !

LXXXVIII

Peace and Goodwill toward men He came to teach—
A Universal Brotherhood in Christ—
Of Time when Love shall mitigate war's breach,
And nations in leagued amity subsist,—
Of Law that shall for ever co-exist
With God—and our conceptions of the right
Be ruled in presence of the Eternal Light !

LXXXIX

How meetly from the poor His Gospel came,
Those humble dwellers whom The Christ had taught !
As man with man the stubborn will to tame,
Nerved by His glowing zeal, His guileless thought !
Till from such close communion they were wrought
Into fit instruments to work His will,
And in men's hearts the Living Truth instil.

xc

His covenant had never been withdrawn.

So to the Jews, and to the Jews alone,

The first faint intimations of the Dawn

Which should the night of centuries dethrone.

God's Light of Justice never clearer shone—

To Abraham, for Faith in worship seal'd,

The Covenant of the Promise was reveal'd.

xci

Yet even the Chosen of God were not exempt

From that same stern, inexorable law

Of Death for Sin!—how often did they tempt

His anger, and upon their children draw

The wrath His ever-watchful love foresaw?—

Warn'd by the mouth of Prophets, Priests, and Kings,

Still clave they to their vain imaginings!

XCII

Forewarn'd, they had their fate before their eyes—
 Freewill to choose Jehovah for their King,
To make of self a loving sacrifice,
 And give Him of their heart's best offering,
 Or freedom to their own blind wills to cling,
To set up idols of insensate lust
And drag their generations in the dust.

XCIII

Like children, seizing first the glittering bait,
 They snatch'd at Pleasure with its lurid plea,
Choosing the certain death that doth await
 All who give rein to sensual vanity.
 Till, wearied out with their Idolatry,
God scatter'd them the heathen host among,
That they might learn through suffering whence they
 sprung.

xciv

Even as in later times Imperial Rome,—
Whose virile manhood held the World in fee,—
When luxury had undermined the home,
Gave up her strength to shameless harlotry.
Till the Barbaric sword alone could free
A Nation so debauch'd with lust and wine
As to forget her great Augustan line.

* * * * *

XCV

Doth it not seem as tho' His life were vain,
Since they for whom His Gospel was proclaim'd
In scornful incredulity remain?—
While those, whom 'heirs of righteousness' He named,
Press'd pitiless where The Light on Calvary flamed!—
Who still await a Prince of David's line,
Tho' David's lineage lies in dust supine!

XCVI

Will they at last their Rock of Refuge find?
Will God regather them from East and West,
For nigh two thousand years borne down the wind
Of pitiless retribution and unrest?—
Would they might turn from their belated Quest,
And recognise in Christ great David's Son,
In Whom the Future and the Past are One!

xcvii

Are there not signs that God still loveth them ?
Still guideth them ? still strengtheneth their hands ?
While stone by stone the New Jerusalem
Is rising 'mid the wreck of other lands—
For as their Wealth, so too their Power expands—
From East to West the sky is all aflame
With dawning greatness of the Jewish name !

* * * * *

XCVIII

O God, if all our thoughts of Thee are vain !
How fitfully the Lamp of Faith doth gleam !
Life holds so much of bitterness and pain,
How may we know Thy power is all-supreme ?
Life's Tiding Grace ?—Ah, like a limpid stream
That purls and ripples on its sun-bright way,
Too shallow for the needs of every day !

XCIX

' Fled is my Faith '—how pitiful the cry !
Or, ' Daily doth my Faith grow less and less '—
On every breeze is borne the pained sigh
Of men who dare not all their heart confess.
O shield us from the storm, the strain, the stress !
Uphold us in this Age of greed and gain,
And 'stablish in our hearts Thy perfect reign !

C

We doubt of life—for who can hope to stand
In faint remembrance mid the drifts of Time?
We are but units in an unit land,
With scarce the cadence of a passing chime,
And shall the Great Unseen with power sublime
Review the labour of our little day?
Heeds He the many vigils of our way?

C1

What of the suppliant hosts that Time hath seen,
Gather'd to rest with their devout desire?
The myriad myriads on this verge of green,
Still looking upward to the central fire?
The multitudes the Future shall inspire?—
Our utter insignificance of being
Makes us despair of all beyond our seeing!

CII

Our minds are finite—can we measure His ?
Judge of Infinity by finite laws ?—
When of all worlds we fail to unravel This,
How may we solve the Great Primæval Cause ?
Our narrow orb of sense its light withdraws,—
While in the unfathom'd spaces of the sky
Worlds yet undreamt of may go wheeling by !

CIII

The thousand questions that come surging in,
And thunder like the waves upon the beach ;
The haven that we ever strive to win,
And yet, despite our striving, never reach ;
The doubts that in due season fall to each,
Which baffle and leave us fever'd with the dread
That all Life's beauty is for ever fled.

CIV

And where at last must all our questions end ?

Are they not even as futile as we deem

A child's first questions of his earliest friend ?

More futile ! for what folly must it seem

To question where we find no answering gleam,

No guiding hand, no tongue that shall expound

The mysteries which in our lives abound ?

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cv

O breaking hearts ! O smiles that fain would hide
Your anguish from the prying gaze of Morn !
The bitter tears that Beauty's cheeks have dyed,
Only to vanish with the Day new-born !
The biting wounds the cruel gyves have worn !
O who would be so fetter'd; so distraught,
If that far Crown of Thorns availeth naught ?

cvi

And would you tear it from their aching sight,
And tell them all is dark beyond the veil ?
That human misery is but a blight
That falls haphazard where the roses trail ?
That fortitude and faith alike must fail,
For Calvary fades, old landmarks disappear,
And cometh none with any hope of cheer ?

CVII

Shall Woman's sweet Devotion also pass,
Her tender trust in all things pure and true?
And with it half the joy she did amass
While Faith and Hope the Day's bright curtain
drew?—
No more the mystic bond, uniting two?
Marriage a common mart, Love's altars broken,
And Woman's virtue by each wind bespoken?

CVIII

O little lives, brought thro' the starry gloom,
Fragrant as early flowers of Paradise!
O little Innocents, whose tender bloom
Softer than dew upon the violet lies!
Who would not rescue you from sin and vice,
From the fell canker of corroding chains,
From joyless life, drawn from degenerate veins?

CLX

Heredity ! thy awful laws reveal
The clinging, cumulative curse of sin—
The secret faults which men would fain conceal,
With all the host of ills they usher in,
Now show their vile and noisome origin.
O let us not, amid our lightest laughter,
Forget our debt to those who follow after !

CX

The Devil's weapon, Evil, we may find
Turn'd 'gainst himself to advance the sum of
Good ;
For trials and vexations in their kind
Oft serve as strong incentives in the blood
To battle bravely with Life's swelling flood !—
Had ancient Nilus his full tribute paid,
The harvest of Man's conquests had been stay'd !

CXI

For mark the savage with his simple wants
—Content, if in the sunshine he may bask !
The torpor of indifference him enchants,
And drowsy negligence of any task
Save that of blinking at the stars ; the mask
Of the wide globe 'wilders his childish brain,
And so a thousand years he will remain.

* * * * *

CXII

What man that hath a weak and ailing child
Learns not to love it over all the rest ?
So may sweet Pity's heart be reconciled,
While larger love exalts the parent's breast.
The little sufferer is of all most blest,
For sympathy fails never of its balm,
Heals every wound, and can all tears becalm.

CXIII

Thus every sorrow hides a central joy,
And with all suffering and pain'd under-song
God mingles a bright tempering of alloy
That more than compensates the seeming wrong ;
For to the maim'd Life's holiest joys belong—
A keener sensibility to bliss,
A finer insight into all that is.

CXIV

Sorrow and Pain have their love-sanction'd part

In the great scheme of universal good—

Without them how refine the human heart,

Too soon elated unless these withstood?

So lightly do we flit from mood to mood,

We seldom see the heart-break of the thing

Until the Angel, Pity, droops her wing.

CXV

And Sorrow serves not only to refine,

For Love leaps up with tenfold sympathy

To mitigate the suffering and the sin

That are a part of the divine decree,

In that foreshadowing of the life to be—

Where Pity with her love-illumined face

Shows Grief to have been God's hallowing means of
Grace.

CXVI

Twin Angels, Pity and Pain, redeem mankind—
For every time we sin we cast abroad
Seeds which Fate's ever-fructifying wind
Will bring to ripeness in some fair abode,
Increasing sorrow and the human load—
O who would sin, if first he did review
The pity of the thing he fain would do?

* * * * *

CXVII

Cloud not nor scorn the bright faith of the Poor !—

Revere, thou godless man ! those toil-worn hands—

Why should they battle on, why seek to endure

The thousand slights foster'd of thy demands,

Unless beyond the gloom God's Heaven expands,

Where every man shall meet with his reward

And their long-suffering voice at last be heard ?

CXVIII

How may we reconcile our faith in Man

With the aimless, homeless host beneath our skies ?

The million prostrate, that the few may span

With covetous pride the wealth the land supplies,

'Mid luxury of a thousand selfish ties,

Heedless of those strong arms to which they owe

Immunity from toil and foreign foe.

CXIX

Yet those broad acres that our fathers loved,
The stately chase with all its woodland sheen,
The slender-footed deer, that whilom roved
'Mid forest aisles and vales of spangled green,
The winding avenues, the distant scene,
And last the ancestral Manor, ivy-crown'd,
Still breathing of a feudal peace profound,

CXX

And over all the bearing of the host,
That perfect blending of good sense and pride,—
That breed of Barons, once the exalted boast
Of Britain, now transmuted in the tide
Of noble lineage to mere gold allied,—
Courteous and kind, with that attendant grace
That is the sure presentment of his race.

CXXVI

O who can view such scenes indifferently ?

Rather than see those old-world Manors die,
Almost one were in love with tyranny,

Almost one could ignore the widow's cry,

The thousand breaking hearts beneath the sky—
Perish the thought ! God gave all life to share
The realm of earth, the commonwealth of air.

* * * * *

CXXII

Interminable streets of London Town !

Teeming with myriads, myriads yet to come !

How do ye set our poor vain natures down,

How stultify our every thought of Home !

For here, as in the desert, we might roam,

Unnoticed, tho' a thousand pass us by,

Unloved, tho' many a loving heart be nigh !

CXXIII

Bewilder'd 'mid the clash and the recoil

Of millions battling for the prize of place,

Man, blinded by the bigotry of toil,

O'erthrows the starry ladder of the race.

The struggle for existence doth efface

The self-denying ordinance of life,

Since he who would subsist must live by strife !

CXXIV

Each hath a certain calling, each his sphere—
To each man comes the knowledge of his worth—
Then let him follow with a conscience clear
The path mark'd out by Destiny from birth,
Walking with fearless step the bounteous Earth,
Pleased with the daily substance God hath given,
And living as beneath the eye of Heaven.

* * * * *

CXXV

Man's conquests over Matter—do they move
From God, or from his own determinate will?
For what do his so-vast achievements prove
But that all hazards yield to mortal skill,
Indomitable courage, scorn of ill?—
How through repeated failures man may rise
To heights beyond the heights he did emprise?

CXXVI

How else had the Pharaonic Priesthood curb'd
The mighty waters of triumphant Nile?
How else had the Phœnician prows disturb'd
The long, still dream of many a slumbering Isle,
Lull'd by the gentle splash of waves erstwhile?
Idolators! what did High Heaven reveal
That their own perseverance did not steal?

CXXVII

Grant that in Man may dwell Empyreal Power,

What may his legion'd sovereignty control ?

Man, whose dominion lightens but an hour !

Whose lordship fails i' the frontiers of the Soul !

Before this New Omniscience we extol,

Let it resolve the bounds of Time and Space,

Allot each World its orbit and its place !

CXXVIII

Faith born of Reverence ever lives and glows—

He that hath seen God's mystic fingers traced

Upon the Hills and their eternal snows,

Will last deny the Presence that hath placed

This little Planet in the boundless waste,

What vails it all our striving and achieving,

If here the soul its last bright web is weaving ?

CXXIX

Had not the Greeks of old as fine a sense
Of true discernment betwixt Right and Wrong?
An intellectual manhood as intense?
A soul that soar'd the highest gods among?
Yet knew they not the song Isaiah sung!—
To them the Holy Spirit was not given
In that first sign and sacrament of Heaven.

CXXX

If Conscience thro' the world of life doth reign,
An instinct born and disciplined of dread—
In man evolved from punishment and pain,
Thro' æons upon æons perfected,
Owning the mighty impress of the dead—
What of the still Small Voice we deem'd divine,
Whose sanction was Morality in fine!

CXXXI

O baleful lure, to lead our feet astray !

If we deny the God within the breast,
The God without is but a feeble stay !

And where may Man's betravail'd spirit rest,

If Conscience is to lower realms deprest ?—
Conscience, whose final judgment all await,
Strong in whose strength Man may think scorn of Fate !

CXXXII

Grant this mute sense stirs in the brute creation—

O what but Conscience makes the Lion cower
Before the eye of Man and learn his station,

Tho' greater far in strength and valorous power,

Man's overlordship Conscience doth not lower,
And, far from levelling all on Nature's plan,
It differentiates the brute from Man !

CXXXIII

To Man pertains a glory that doth force
E'en from the brute acknowledgment of God !
Flowing from that same transcendental Source,
That hath through Man the teeming world subdued,
That makes him fear'd by all the forest brood,
Since none unshrinkingly his glance receives,
That glance to which the might of Godhead cleaves !

CXXXIV

In His own image God created Man,
And over all things gave him godlike power—
A mind that may His World-Creation scan,
With Conscience as his spiritual dower :
A gift that should preserve him, lest he lower
His nature to the beast which doth not change
But down the ages prowls the selfsame range.

CXXXV

This Living Voice within the human will
That would our utmost thoughts and actions frame,
This Spiritual Essence that doth fill
Our minds with mystery and our souls with flame,
Still whispering of the Presence whence it came,
This hidden Spring, this Fount of all our being,
This Element that dwells beyond our seeing!

CXXXVI

We who are in the world are of the world,
And worldliness is ever our first care—
Children of Fate! whom some strong Hand hath hurl'd
Into the stellar silence from afar,
And left us wondering of what world we are—
Strive as we will to reach the Master Mind,
Impenetrable mists before, behind!

CXXXVII

Before our minds may mirror the divine,

We must bring under sway the stubborn flesh—

Not to the body shall our wills incline,

But to the spirit bathed in light afresh !

Children of Nature ! taught by her to thresh

The grain of life from out the husk of death,

And in her solitudes find calmer faith.

* * * * *

CXXXVIII

Bereft of God, is aught worth Man's desire ?

Money ?—the vulgar tyrant of the crowd !

Or, if to higher things he would aspire,

With larger mind and faculties endow'd,

His life to some ennobling service vow'd,

—Can glory won in the far quest of Truth

Repay the gold of his ungarner'd youth ?

CXXXIX

Is Pleasure more commendable a guide ?

To snatch the sunbeams as they dance and rise ?—

A sweet philosophy that few will chide !

The madder grows the chase, the more she flies !—

The soul looks out at intervals, and sighs

To think of what we are, and might have been,

Who look'd to Pleasure as a deathless Queen !

CXL

Life calls to us, ' O seize the fleeting hour,
For like the leaves Youth's garlands fall away ;
The Present only lies within thy power—
Grasp it ! or else for evermore delay.
Love's golden harvest hath so brief a day !
O lose not for remote, imagined gain
The precious hours that still to thee remain ! '

CXLI

And when we reap the aftermath of Sin,
Behold the havoc wrought by rank Desire—
The temple of the Soul laid waste within,
Love's sanctuary scorch'd and swept by fire,
Love martyr'd for a moment's breathless hire !
Oh, think not God and Nature are at strife,
To rob thy soul of one sweet draught of life !

CXLII

Seek not the unsanction'd joy, the illicit quest ;
For, if there be no other Life but THIS,
Before thou dost thy better self divest
To stake thy happiness upon a kiss,
Or some such other fleet encircling bliss,
O be thou sure when Passion's hour hath sped,
Remorse shall ask no questions of thy dead !

CXLIII

For, if there be no Heaven nor Hell—but Here—
How much the greater need that truth endure !
That we may make our Earth a heavenly sphere
By breaking the long bondage of the Poor,
Nor to Life's Pities add one pity more !
The many call thee to their higher need,
—Man true to Man, and Earth were Heaven indeed !

CXLIV

O let no momentary joy enslave
The spirit which thou hast received pure !
The fields of dalliance flower but to the grave,
Gird swift to flee the fragrance and the lure !
O not to selfish sins thyself inure !
“ Follow thy pleasures with determined feet ”—
Can love and lust in such commingling meet ?

CXLV

O God,—if in the spiritual mood
The heart rejoiceth in its purity—
When the soft tongue of passion fires the blood,
How far off the still Voice that speaks of Thee !
How mighty the temptation that we flee !
Why hast Thou made the face of Sin so sweet
That all our nature yearneth for defeat ?

CXLVI

Answer thou, Age of lethargy and vice !
With stimulants are all our senses fed—
The patient soul is made a sacrifice
To pay for pleasures of the heart and head,
While soft narcotics numb with nervous dread—
No wonder its fair vestal-light is dimm'd,
And God the further off, Love's lamp untrimm'd !

CXLVII

To lust is not to love—Love scorneth lust !—
How canst thou say ' I love,' and Love defile ?
For Love is reverent, tender of its trust,
Nor ever could it harbour thought of guile :
Love knows no wantonness, no Devil's wile !—
True love is a perpetual sacrifice,
Whose smoke in heaven-ascending thoughts doth rise.

CXLVIII

Two Roads present themselves to every man—
The Way of Christ, beset with thorns and tears,
The other roof'd with many a flowery span,
And redolent of all that life endears—
In each the smoke of sacrifice appears :
Two victims are upon Life's altar laid,
And Soul or Body now must meet the blade !

* * * * *

CXLIX

The Sceptic warns us that the Christian creed
Is but the love of Self, in form disguised,
That could we analyse each noble deed,
Some selfish motive ever it avized.
Is Virtue by such sophistry chastised?
Are not our greatest actions incomplete
Until we lay them at our Master's feet?

CL

'The infinite conceit,' another cries,
'Of fellowship and close commune with God !
O look on all the life beneath the skies,
The unconsecrated hosts that here have trod,
The myriads yet unshapen from the clod,
Then selfwards—and what doth thy search reveal?
A whirling mote splay'd from Life's glittering wheel !'

CLI

‘O would that God had wrought His meaning plain,
Not leaving life a riddle, hardly guess’d!’—
The cry that lives upon the lips of pain,
That found an echo in old Khayyám’s breast.—
Let no such diffident murmur break thy rest,
The attesting Heavens His wondrous works recite,
The sun by day, the moon and stars by night.

CLII

And still another, ‘Only minds diseased
The morbid craving after God reveal;
For once the Daimon of Death hath been appeased,
No longer at the Shrine of Faith we kneel.’
O faint of heart! to whom wouldst thou appeal?
The truant body, rebel of unrest?
Or the bright soul, its fair and heavenly guest?

CLIII

But when the body with dread pain is bow'd—
And our redemption cometh oft through pain—
The spiritual nature cries aloud
For that strong Arm which can alone sustain.
Then turneth home the wanderer again !
Happy the man, who needs no chastening Hand
To discipline his will to God's command !

CLIV

And others, more defiant in their tone,
Have solved the riddle of the toiling earth—
'Sport for the Heavenly Huntsman !' sayeth one,
And yet another, 'Sorrow and joyless mirth
His bifold, cynic gift to man at birth !'
What answer unto such wild hearts as these ?
What answer that can wholly set at ease ?

CLV

Who hath not felt how little here availeth,
Since all are creatures of the creature Chance?
Yet ever in the soul such doubt assaileth
Glimmers the wonder of this World's Romance,
Where all that breathes His Glory doth enhance!
Each life a link in the Eternal Chain,
Unclasp'd by God, to close in Him again.

CLVI

'Tis easier to Believe than Disbelieve!
Tho' mortal mind may never apprehend
Infinite God, nor fixedly conceive
A Time without beginning, without end,
Nor where the stars in their bright courses wend.
With every Spring a deeper reverence grows,
Lights with the lily, reddens with the rose.

CLVII

Who, that hath scaled the heights, knows not the hour
When from the solitude of some lone peak
The Revelation of The Eternal Power
First broke in waves upon him, while his cheek
Flamed with the Visible Presence? how grown meek
He knelt with all his spiritual vestments rent
Before The Throne of Thrones Omnipotent?

CLVIII

Except like little children ye believe,
Ye shall not see the Kingdom of your God.
Ever the eternal verities deceive
The mightiest minds, the brave that upward plod
The way so many wilder'd feet have trod,
While unto little children hath been given
Faith that shall open wide the gates of Heaven!

CLIX

But *live* the Christ-like life, and thou shalt know

“Whether the doctrine be of God or not”—

What simpler mandate could our Lord bestow?

How doth it lighten our poor human lot!

How soon are all our doubts and fears forgot!

For God reveals Himself in many ways,

Till Disbelief a doubt of Doubt betrays!

CLX

God gave us of His own Immortal Soul

That Gift of Gifts—Unfathomable Love!

Our kinship is beyond our own control,

Our spirits to celestial music move,

Our noblest thoughts and aspirations prove

That we are sons of God, children of Light,

And born to live for ever in His sight.

CLXI

An old man's judgment in the hour of Death
Is testimony worth a young man's ear,
When thro' the last watch rings the cry of Faith,
"The Lord my refuge is, I have no fear"—
Doubt vanishes before the Morn of Cheer!
Night's closing vigil Light Divine doth leaven,
And happy Peace, the olive branch of Heaven.

* * * * *

CLXII

His Life and Teaching cannot be in vain,
Since no Philosophy the World hath seen
Can heal and succour, lighten and sustain,
Like that of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene,
The Guide of Guides when Doubt's dark days convene!
And in the lonely passage of the tomb
What hand like His to lead us thro' the gloom?

CLXIII

What man would flinch or find it hard to die
If Christ should meet him in the way to-morrow,
And tell him of the Shadow drawing nigh?
Dost think that he would look on Death with sorrow?
Nay, rather, would he not new comfort borrow
To *know* that Christ doth live, hath power to save,
That all we cherish blooms beyond the grave?

CLXIV

And canst thou doubt that Christ doth surely live ?
That Sun and Moon and Stars hold Him in awe ?
What Mind but of The Highest could conceive
The Cosmic cycle, the Metonic law ?
This wondrous world from which our life we draw ?
We feel the beat of His o'er-shadowing wings,
The harmony that links all sentient things.

CLXV

Why should we dread the silence of the tomb ?
For all things to their elements return.
Earth, air, fire, water, constitute our home,
In these alone ourselves we may discern.
Let none his hour of requiescence mourn—
The body mingles once again with flame,
The soul soars toward the Glory whence it came.

CLXVI

Yet even in this little World of ours
That speeds toward dissolution and decay,
Where Man is arrogant of his vain powers,
And Beauty holds her court but for a day,
Where Lust and Vice their rival charms display,—
How few there are would willingly resign
One single hour to share the Life Divine !

* * * * *

CLXVII

The Church of Christ must heal the world's unrest,
In Her alone may sustenance be found !—
The Centuries renew their sleepless quest,
And man is treading upon higher ground :
Oh, on the heights may plenteous grace abound !—
Her gift is Peace, and Love that shall enhance
The glory and wonder of this world's romance !

CLXVIII

O who can doubt Her ministering power,
The spiritual sceptre which She wields ?—
Deprive Her of Her immemorial dower,
Blot out Her Light from all our English fields,
The virtuous lives Her bright example yields,
And in that day when Faith and Reverence go
Man will look out upon a world of woe !

CLXIX

For what avail these conflicts dire of creed,
When, 'mid divisions that have rent the Church,
Our Faith is jeopardized in very deed,
While they are many who God's Word besmirch ?
— Ignoble strife ! will none redeem the search
For all that is most beautiful and true,
And in men's hearts the Lamp of Faith renew ?

CLXX

What signifies that Anglican and Greek
Have stigmatized the practices of Rome,
When all may find The Truth who truly seek ?—
' I am the Way, the Light that leads toward Home.'
By the Way of the Gate the Shepherd bids you come !
The flocks are many, and scatter'd o'er the wold,
Yet ever the Crook of Christ would all enfold.

CLXXI

Yea : Unity !—but under God, not man—

No papal domination for the weak !—

The arch of Heaven is not too wide a span

To ensphere the freedom that the soul doth seek,

The silence where His Many Voices speak.

He that is not against, is for the King—

Ah, from this bond may closer union spring !

CLXXII

Our passionate conflicts have their day and die—

Sons of ONE FATHER, need our paths dispart?

O may we not in brotherhood draw nigh,

And worship Him together, heart to heart?

Shall wars of ritual keep for aye apart

Those whom God's loving spirit doth possess,

Who fervently the selfsame Christ profess?

CLXXIII

In Catholicity there breathes a voice
Thrilling adown the arches of the Past,
Whose music still doth bid the World rejoice
In One Great Church that shall prevail at last,
Linking all creeds in One Communion vast—
In that far time when perfect Love shall reign,
And all men's hearts be knit in Christ again.

CLXXIV

In all religions God hath sacrifice !
The pale Mohammedan with eyes eterne
No worldly lure, no dalliance can entice,—
Taught from his youth all froward pleas to spurn,—
To disregard the Prophet's mandate stern,
'Offer thy vow, tho' thou be far or near,
When from high Mosque Muezzin calls to prayer.'

CLXXV

Lo, too, that City of God in the crimson East !

The sunrise gilding minaret and tower,

The myriad worshippers, the solemn feast,

When Ganges claims his matutinal dower,

And man and maid their rich libations pour,

Scattering upon the river's ample breast

The cheerful offerings that God loveth best.

* * * * *

CLXXVI

Gather the Nations in one fold again,
That all may in the Peace of Christ abide !
Then shall Thy Church with Evangelic Reign
Renew the world from silver tide to tide,
An effluence of love from Thy dear side,
Till all the streams of this our life shall be
Merged in Thine Ocean of Eternity.

CLXXVII

Arise, O Lord ! and let not man prevail,
Let not his arrogance go unproved !
Put him in fear that so he cannot fail
To know Thy promises are not removed,
That 'neath Wide Wings Thou shelterest Thy beloved.
O teach the Nations that they are but men
Ere they presume upon Thy Truth again !

CLXXVIII

The Lord shall be the God of the whole Earth !

Lo, now His Light illumines every shore !

All sects and creeds acclaim the Saviour's birth,

And hail Him King of Kings for evermore !

The multitude of the Isles shall Him adore !

Till in the fulness of the perfect day

The night of doubt and discord pass away.

CLXXIX

Then diverse tongues shall in one language meet,

And souls estranged move in divine accord,

While heart to heart and star to star repeat,

‘Glory and Honour to the Incarnate Lord !’

For Day and Night one tribute shall afford—

When Darkness stills the voices of the North,

The South her herald song shall utter forth !

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THE SKAITH OF GUILLARDUN

RECEIVED JULY 11 1901

THE SKAITH OF GUILLARDUN

O FOR the golden morn of old Romance,
The world's glad youth now fled forever by !
When knights were chivalrous, and lady's glance
Could kindle valour in a lover's eye ;
When greed of gain and worldly circumstance
Had not taught men true manhood to decry.
O souls of lovers, long since passed away,
Breathe your sweet plainings on this ancient lay !

II

Why should we break the chancel of the dead ?
Why vex them in their everlasting sleep ?
Why idly deem that their bright souls have fled,
Whose lives in ours perpetual vigil keep ?
O why are all our wistful fancies fed
With thoughts that they around us watch and weep ?—
Upon the air some fragrance lingereth yet
Of loves and passions that long time have set.

III

In Brittany there lived a stainless knight,
 In gentleness no maid could tenderer be,
 Yet mark him moving thro' the press of fight
 And none more terrible in arms than he.
 The strong are ever sparing of their might—
 Mercy the radiant child on Valour's knee.
 And as in war his courage none assail'd,
 In peace his counsel more and more prevail'd.

IV

So, meriting a higher confidence,
 The knight was made Justiciar of the realm;
 And when far lands call'd his loved Monarch thence,
 Into his hands was thrust the state's proud helm.—
 His firm and fearless rule gave wide offence,
 The menace gather'd but could not o'erwhelm.—
 He bent the rebel barons to his will,
 Enforced the feudal vows each should fulfil.

v

Look not for gratitude from mortal Prince :
 Sir Eliduc had served his liege-lord well,
 Like one who would by deeds alone convince,
 Not by what braggart tongue might lightly tell.
 Rebellion under him did writhe and wince,
 And for too great a loyalty—he fell !
 Envy hath audience swift of royal ears,
 Suspicion never slumbers, never spares !

vi

In bitterness of soul, Sir Eliduc
 Grieved that his lifelong fealty naught avail'd ;
 All joy of life his countenance forsook,
 While in his winter'd mind ambition paled ;
 His banishment unjust he could not brook,
 Tho' mid the storm of lies he never quail'd.
 With such calm dignity his lot he bore
 That they who loved him revered him the more.

VII

His Lady leal still tenderer became,
And in her wifely solace he forgot
Much of the bitterness and biting shame,
Too plenteously commingled in his lot ;
The cruel taunts that fann'd his blood to flame
By her were soothed, until they stung him not.
Rose at the last the spirit of the man
In fierce revolt at his opprobrious ban.

VIII

Then, gathering round him zealous knights and true,
He vow'd far vengeance on the rebel throng.
The harp of David wrought in him anew—
The Anoint of God his hand should not bewrong.
Let not proud Anger futile griefs review,
For so the weak untimely woes prolong.
His spirit bad him breast the surly seas,
Nor bend to Fate's untowardly decrees.

IX

With staunch farewell, as friend took leave of friend,
And straining to his breast his voiceless mate,
He vow'd his love would stead her to life's end,
Who was his star, the fair elect of fate,
That evermore his thoughts would her attend,
Who might, heart-confident, his coming wait,
Then with sore longing, and of cheer bereft,
Launch'd forth, and soon the sounding furrows cleft.

X

Blow soft, ye winds, to soothe a hero's pillow,
Speak low, ye waves, that splash against his prow,
Yet, if ye rage, let not the rolling billow
Its stormy crests too mightily endow ;
Scourge not that head which like the wind-bent willow
The Acerbity of Fate did oft avow.
Blow high, blow low,—your buffeting is kind
Compared with that which in man's world we find !

XI

And many a sunset drew into the west,
And many a sunrise leapt the barrier'd main,
And many a morning woke his deep unrest,
And many a night wore by in sleepless pain,
And bitter waters well'd within his breast
For her he nevermore might see again.
Till the white cliffs of Albion uprear'd
Thro' the soft mist, in pearly pink ensphered.

XII

So bearing far along that pleasant shore,
The white gull calling ever in their wake,
With stout arms resting on the ready oar,
Toward Totenois they drew as day did break.
There disembark'd, all eager to explore
The champaign fair, and find if hearts did ache
Under a thralldom ruthless as their own,
Or what new quest might to their lord be shown.

XIII

Ah, little wot he of the war and strife
 With which that fertile Province was distraught !
 Ah, little wot he that his troubled life
 With greater evil would eftsoons be fraught !
 The Angel of dark Fate with gleaming knife
 The skein of his wild destiny had caught,
 Its warp and weft in other lives to weave—
 Thrice vain from those fell hands to expect reprieve !

XIV

At Excester, a few short leagues removed,
 Dwelt a hoar-winter'd King, whose only child
 Of all fair ladies was the best beloved,
 Nathyet had any lover's tongue beguiled.
 Of many suitors, none had she approved,
 Tho' some were gentle, others rough and wild ;
 And last and worst of these—a border Prince,
 Who, loveward foil'd, by force would her convince.

xv

Her beauty deepen'd, like a cobalt sky
 When of an autumn eve the moon breaks through
 And cleaving the piled cloudrack racing by
 Suffuses all the heavens with lustre new ;
 And, like the Queen of Night enthroned on high,
 All lesser beauties waned before her view ;
 While the thick coils of her dark braided hair
 Show'd her pale face more delicately fair.

xvi

Sith nowise could he gain her sire's consent,
 Nor win the maid to favour of his suit,
 That pride-vext lover, balk'd of his intent,
 Averr'd that he would seize the tempting fruit—
 Nor guard nor let his passion should prevent,
 Fair Guillardun should bend, tho' pale and mute—
 So laid the country waste with fire and sword,
 By maid and childing wife alike abhorr'd.

XVII

Now when Sir Eliduc learnt how it fared
 With the frail king, and that he suffer'd much
 At those remorseless hands, which neither spared
 Woman nor babe caught up in their fell clutch,
 Like true knight-errant, he his arms prepared
 For Excester, where his address was such
 That he received a gracious welcoming
 From that begirt and venerable king.

XVIII

Thus was he bound in service for a year,
 And straight devised expedients to entrap
 The prince whose ruffian passion wrought such fear,
 And left in many a home a parlous gap.
 No longer should that raider domineer,
 And wreak his miscreant wrath without mishap!
 And oft he turn'd it in his labouring mind
 How he might now that prince of spoilers bind.

XIX

So bode his hour, and soon the chance he sought
Came, like the breath of summer, to his soul ;
For flying child and matron tidings brought
That the arch-ravisher was levying toll,
With gonfalons advanced, all flame-enwrought,
Their beauteous city, Excester, his goal ;
And with him came a press of arméd knights,
Whose glittering plumes the sun of May bedights.

XX

To the hoar king thus counsell'd Eliduc—
‘ If your stout carls can hold the city walls,
My liegemen true for ambushment shall look
In the swarth forest that to southward falls.
Then, when the Reaver's force is spent and shook,
Or when his bugle from the fight recalls,
I and my Breton knights will fall on him,
And battle shall he have both stark and grim !’

XXI

The fire which smoulder'd in those agéd eyes
Leapt flamelike o'er that kingly countenance,
With ruddier lights than frore antarctic skies
Take on at sunset, and his burning glance
The wintry years did swiftly exorcise.
And as a boy, in youth's exuberance,
Sniffs with keen zest the breeze of coming war,
So courted he the conflict from afar.

XXII

Defeat a brave man will not contemplate,
Tho' more than life may on his sword depend.
Let peril knock but at a loved one's gate,
He first knows fear whose courage none might bend.
So with the king at this new turn of Fate,
Heart-fear, heart-love, now in his breast contend.
Once more the witchery of one small face
Urged host on host God's coinage to debase.

XXIII

Now happen'd it as Eliduc foresaw—

The assault was press'd with never-wavering zeal.
Nathless in that defence nor breach nor flaw

Could the besieger find, nor lodgment steal.
While they, with burning pitch, did overawe

The foe that thro' the blinding smoke-rift reel :
Wave upon wave with backward hiss withdrew,
Yet higher still the next its storm-crests threw !

XXIV

Hard put was Eliduc to hold in check

Hour by long hour the temper of his band.
Yet, that no stain their after-glory fleck,

On straining leash they listed his command,
Not doubting of the vengeance they would wreak

When he should bid them forth with leaping brand.
Then, as slow day to swifter evening wore,
His voice rang out above the battle's roar.

XXV

Surprised, out-flank'd by this new-breathéd force,
The invaders an unequal combat wage ;
Sir Eliduc spurr'd at their cluster'd horse,
And thrust upon the Prince his battle-gage.
Now, both unsaddled, each hath swift recourse
To shorter weapons, husbanding his rage.
No sweeter sound the warrior's life affords
Than the soft clash and chime of closing swords !

XXVI

Sir Eliduc's bright blade is at his throat,
Sir Eliduc's mail'd foot is on his breast,
The misty meadows round about him float,
Yet his unconquer'd soul takes up the quest—
' Love, Guillardun ! tho' now thou art far remote,
My spirit shall wait thee in the glowing West.'
So saying closed his eyes on mortal pain,
To dwell with those lost souls in battle slain.

XXVII

Thus Eliduc won honour of the king,
And many a doughty deed thereafter wrought.
Yet in his mind did no soft impulse spring
To view this later Helen all men sought,
As tho' fate warn'd him of sweet communing
With one whose beauty with such ills was fraught.
And much she marvell'd that he never came,
Who in her cause had won undying fame.

XXVIII

And maiden pique and womanly constraint
For long a bitter war within her waged;
Until his chill neglect she did attain,
And her high pride noway could be assuaged;
And of her will how she might him acquaint,
She turn'd it in her mind, so much outráged.
His courtesy she might in sooth command
Who had relieved her from that ruthless hand.

XXIX

So, pleading interest in the Prince's death,
A gracious missive sent she by her squire ;
And quickly came and went her tender breath,
Till she the answer had to her desire ;
And much she question'd of his knightly faith,
Oft wondering if herself he would admire.
Then 'gan she robe herself with quiet haste,
Lest he her blithe expectancy outpaced.

XXX

And she hath placed a red rose in her hair—
O not more balmy than her fragrant tresses !—
And roses three from her bright girdle peer,
Of that dark tint that Love's true heart confesses !
And she is all a rose, as sweet and fair
As any that June's gentle sun caresses !
O cruel Love ! to pluck from such a stem
The freshest, fairest flower the dews begem.

XXXI

With fluttering heart she hears his courser's tread,
 And peeps beyond the lattice fearfully ;
 With colouring cheek she notes his noble steed,
 Rein'd in with all the grace of chivalry.
 Stand back, fair Guillardun ! the moments speed,
 Thy woman's fate thou may'st no longer flee !
 A few short breaths and he will kiss thy hand,
 No more thy peace shall be at thy command !

XXXII

The knight hath ta'en her stilly hand in his :
 She sways like a wind-stirr'd lily of the wood,
 For now she feels the tingling of his kiss,
 Convey'd by that mute trespass to her blood.
 The secret that she hopes his eyes may miss
 Mantles her cheeks in an encrimson'd flood.
 With chaste reserve her gentle hand she frees,
 On silken couch she stays her trembling knees.

XXXIII

And much she ponders on his troubled mien,
Which wakes a sweet uncertainty the more ;
And much she wonders if his smile may screen
A grief on which he hath but swung the door ;
With covert glance and lashes droop'd between,
His unplumb'd depths next peers she to explore.
For women, since the first fair Eve began,
Are fondly fain to read the heart of man !

XXXIV

He takes his leave,—and all her sun of life
Sinks with his courser in the crimson west ;
And maiden hopes and fears in fitful strife
Now wage tempestuous war in her fair breast ;
Her deep-drawn sighs are mutinously rife—
O to recall that late-bewelcomed guest !
The stealthy dark draws close on autumn eves,
Love's plaint alone the brooding silence grieves.

XXXV

‘Alas,’ quoth she, ‘what hapless woe is mine
To love a stranger knight so tenderly !
O wherefore at first sight my heart resign,
Who know not yet his kindred or degree !
Ah, fool ! thus to entreat him with these eyne—
He must, mefears, think very light of me !
Perchance he may not bide beyond the morrow,
And my life’s crown will be a crown of sorrow.

XXXVI

‘Yet, of his clemency as belted knight,
Commiserate he must a maid’s distress.
He could not ill my tender heart requite,
And syne I love him more love me the less !
For one so goodly in the world’s fair sight
Must certes be the soul of gentleness !
But should he scorn my love, or slight my name,
How might I bear that ever-during shame ?’

XXXVII

So toss'd upon her pillow fev'rously,
And the dark hours with longing sweet outwore ;
She could not stem her heart's persistency,
For with each hope went ever one fear more—
Now thinking he would love, anon that he
Had pledged his heart in sovereign troth before.
When vestal morn the dewy world awoke,
Love's sleepless vigil her flush'd cheeks bespoke.

XXXVIII

Then to the close ear of her chamberlain
Did Guillardun her heart of fear confide—
' Speech must I have with that brave knight again,
Whatever after-woe shall me betide.
His lustrous eyes I may not long sustain,
Which, if he love me not, my death decide.
How may the heart of any maiden tell
If him she loves, eke loveth her full well ?'

XXXIX

And thus to her the sage old counsellor—

‘If of his knightly love you would have proof,
Despatch to him a ring which once you wore

Or girdle-belt, and if he stand aloof
And your bright gifts forthwith to you restore,

Then know the knight deaf to your fond behoof.
But, if he wear your favour or your ring,
Your queenly heart make ready for the king.’

XL

And she hath sent a ruby ring, thrice kiss’d,
Symbol of Love’s deep and indwelling fire ;

And she hath sent a girdle that she list
Might clasp him with the arms of her desire ;

And scarcely could her tender soul subsist,
Against whose peace a-many thoughts conspire.

O Love, how fathomless are thy decrees !
How limitless thy vast estranging seas !

XLI

How fared it with the knight, Sir Eliduc ?

Was he, too, trammell'd in the self-same toils ?—

As one that on the burnish'd sun doth look,

Bedazed and sightless on himself recoils,

So with Love's blinding brilliance was he shook,

Her pale sweet face his inward peace despoils.

Who that hath felt Love's mountain surges roll

Can weigh the waters that o'erwhelm the soul ?

XLII

What of his knighthood, and his knightly vow ?

What of his troth to deep oblivion thrust ?

What of a pride that not the world could bow ?

What of his honour, trampled in the dust ?

What clemency must Charity allow

If Love the tender scales of faith adjust !

His wife's bedimm'd and desolated face

Now to a pale and crescent moon gives place.

XLIII

Now Passion hath him in her silken snare,
 Now dwells he on her bosom's ripening charm,
 Now riots in the luxury of her hair,
 Now thrills along each lily-cinctured arm,
 Now trembles at the bliss that circles near,
 Now cools, now burns—no moment ever calm.
 Till, fann'd by the fierce winds of gaunt desire,
 His leaping thoughts have set his heart afire.

XLIV

Deem not our erstwhile trust in him misplaced !—
 A 'stainless' saint to-morrow stain'd may be!—
 Ah, judge not this true knight in soulless haste,
 For who of mortal men is passion-free ?
 Yet, till this hour, Sir Eliduc was chaste,
 With brave, clean hands and heart of chivalry.
 And if some cavil that he fell too soon—
 Love counts not Time by sessions of the moon !

XLV

All perils that Love's stony path constrict,
The gusty winds that round Love's summit blow,
All pains that outraged conscience can inflict,
All toils that passionate natures undergo,
All tremors that the faithless heart convict,
With these he wrestled in his night-long woe.
With dawn Desire resumed her sceptred sway,
His last doubt fled before the full-orb'd day !

XLVI.

When Guillardun's blithe messenger appear'd,
And all her bourgeoning heart blossom'd anew,
Madly thro' every vein his blood career'd—
What need of eloquence, Love's words are few !
Her girdle soon his glittering mail ensphered,
And where it clung it did with fire endue.
The circlet bright of her unaltering faith
From his third finger glimmers all too rath !

XLVII

His fiery destrier now champing stands ;
 The rimy cobbles to his hoof resound ;
 Each glowing nostril fev'rously expands ;
 His volley'd breath smokes fast along the ground ;
 Impatiently he waits his lord's commands,
 With twitching ears that strain at every sound.
 Now mounts the knight to do his Love's behest ;
 Now to each glossy flank the spur is press'd.

XLVIII

Like spindrift swept the foam-flakes to his rear,
 Yet his full heart ne'er omen'd the abyss
 That yawns in front of all who love foreswear.
 The fairest maid in this fair land was his—
 A jewel that the mightiest king might wear—
 Why had his laggard suit been so remiss ?
 How many loveless days unfructed sped,
 When every heart-throb now was harvested !

XLIX

Life doth no richer joy to man accord
 Than to behold the Darling of Desire
 Entrancedly awaiting Love's first word,
 That master-word for which the Fates conspire !
 The opals that her childing eyes have stored
 A softer, deeper radiancy acquire—
 Loadstars that scour the darkness of his night,
 They put all faint resolves to headlong flight !

L

He strains her to his passion-laden breast ;
 Like a white homing dove she seeks his arms.
 His ardent lips against her own are press'd ;
 She thrills and pants with poignant sweet alarms.
 He straight disburdens him of love's unrest ;
 She breathes upon him all her fragrant charms.
 His ravish'd eyes her rising colour note
 And the swift heart-throbs at her column'd throat.

LI

Yet such the garb of innocence she wore,
White-robed in panoply of virgin faith,
For very knighthood he his strength forbore :
To him she should not owe her maiden skaith !
How could he bring dishonour to her door,
And make of her heart's love a piteous wraith ?
Whiles yet to him high courage and truth remain,
Her heart of peace he never would profane.

LII

While with himself he wrestled day by day,
His passion sore chastised more chasten'd grew.
Now doth his vacillating mind assay
Such perilous visits never to renew,
Nor could he yet his smoking heart allay,
Which kept the pale temptation full in view.
O Love ! in vain thy breach we may repair,
Ever thou findest entry unaware !

LIII

Ah, welladay ! they met on many an eve,
And cull'd the honey hived in either heart,
Whiles yet no chill of lurking doubt doth grieve
With thought that they could ever draw apart.
The maid too featly doth herself deceive,
The knight hath long forgot his bitter smart.
This earth for them was paradise enow—
What richer could the glowing heavens bestow ?

LIV

The sweetest dream foreshadows an awaking,
True love is oft the harbinger of pain—
How many hearts upon Life's wheel are breaking !
How many lips have seal'd their troth in vain !
How many souls, all earthly hopes forsaking,
Shall yet embark upon Love's shoreless main !
Even so these lovers—each had greatly dared,
So thro' the world they twain together fared.

LV

But swift upon their dream came wingéd Fate—
Time had avenged the knight of his deep wrong.
The land he loved fierce war did desolate,
While round his liege unmanner'd traitors throng.
Him now his chasten'd lord would reinstate,
And, vex'd that he his sojourn should prolong,
Besought him by his oath of fealty
Pressingly to take ship across the sea.

LVI

Forthwith resolved, he sought the King, her sire,
And to him show'd the seal of his recall;
'My lord,' quoth he, 'since you no more require
My faith and sword, for Peace reigns over all,
Of your free grace permit me to retire
To mine own land, which traitors hold in thrall.
While danger threatens Brittany's dear lord,
My homage bids me carry hence my sword.'

LVII

As clouds that gather on the mountain's brow
 Scatter, when the full orb of heaven bursts through,
 So lighten'd the king's face. His yearlong vow
 The grateful monarch of boon grace withdrew.
 With manifold gifts he did his friend endow,
 And wish'd success might wait on arms so true.
 He then embraced the knight, and bade him seek
 Fair Guillardun, his bitter news to break.

LVIII

Sir Eliduc hath ta'en the maid aside,
 And told her of the grief that him bestead.
 The call of Honour might not be denied,
 Tho' sore the severance, deep the parting dread.
 Still manfully must he that pang abide.
 And she, who wist not yet that he was wed
 And fain had kept him near her evermore,
 Against his breast her burden'd plaint did pour—

LIX

‘ Dear lord, your absence I may not sustain,
For die I should of anguish, you being gone.
Perchance you might in battail sore be slain,
And I be left to everlasting moan !
Let not the waves dispart, nor winds constrain
Hearts that reverberate and beat as one !
Beside you, I can still the fret of fear ;
Apart, the long suspense I could not bear.’

LX

He pent her in his bosom’s massy fold
Anigh the heave and storm-press of his heart,
Then full at arm’s length did her wan face hold,
Then drew her lips to his to ease his smart.
And all around them beeches rain’d their gold,
For Autumn here lay slain by Winter’s dart.
Down russet wood-ways, dim with drift of oak,
After long silence chill his accents broke—

LXI

' I may not take you with me, heartes dear,
 Because of the deep faith I owe the king ;
 But this I promise—ere another year
 Pass on to fading leaf, it shall me bring
 Back to those arms that all my world ensphere.
 Against my coming, here I pledge my ring.'
 For answer she her mute face raised to his,
 And seal'd him hers with one long deathless kiss.

LXII

Ah, fortunate that leagues of foam divide
 Albion's bright headlands from the Bretagne shore !
 For those first severing days intensified
 The gnawing anguish that his heart outwore.
 Like one benumb'd, he view'd the ocean wide
 And the white cliffs receding more and more.
 When dusk along the waste of waters crept,
 Aloof, afar, his sentinel watch he kept.

LXIII

And to the night winds cried out 'Guillardun,'
And thrice thro' space he call'd her tristfully;
And 'Guillardun' he sigh'd to the pale moon
To the silvery chime and cadence of the sea;
And evermore was 'Guillardun' his rune,
The music of her name his lullaby.
Whilst morn and eve her passionate pale face
Rose up to shatter his resolvéd peace.

LXIV

Now all his mind was torn with love of her,
Yet from that knowledge he must screen his wife.
He could not be that true heart's murderer,
Whose love for him transcended love of life.
If she once read his soul's sad register,
Not long had he bemoan'd the living strife!
Her heart was cast in such heroic mould,
In martyrdom her passing bell had toll'd.

LXV

'Twixt Scylla and Charybdis now of Fate,
 On rock or whirlpool his riven heart must break.
 Was ever knight in such a parlous strait?
 Doth Fortune evermore her son forsake?
 Ah, only ye who met and loved too late
 Can judge of Love's illimitable ache!
 He now endured, not sought his wife's caress—
 What pity won gave love but one tear less.

LXVI

But the new love possess'd his life and being,
 He might not put it from him for an hour.
 Each morn the phantom he would still be fleeing,
 Each eve brought nearer the pursuing power.
 Ah, wide o'er all the limit of our seeing
 Hover the Harpy Wings that life devour!
 Canst stifle Love? Let whoso will but try it!
 Thrice vain his hope who turns and thinks to fly it!

LXVII

His Lady leal wist that her lord was changed,
 Yet noway could her mind divine the cause.
 She felt his foretime love for her estranged,
 And scann'd her heart for any seeming flaws—
 Could he conceive that her sweet faith had ranged,
 Who only sunn'd herself in his applause?
 The world for her one man alone contain'd,
 His alienated love the more constrain'd.

LXVIII

But little saw she of her pensive lord,
 Whom king and country call'd from her chaste arms.
 Her task to watch and wait, till Time restored
 His dear, accustom'd tribute to her charms,
 For Victory must shine upon his sword!—
 Rich in this thought her bodeful heart she calms.
 Ah, hapless dove! Peace is not yet to come!
 Deadlier than death is Love's fast-closing doom!

LXIX

Sir Eliduc, now raised to highest trust
And charged with the defences of the realm,
Cared little for the seals upon him thrust,
So that his foes he might betimes o'erwhelm.
One face before him fired the battle's lust,
Delay he found in each opposing helm—
Deep to the chin he clove with trenchant steel
Any that cross'd his wing'd and fiery zeal!

LXX

Within the appointed time he did compel
The insurgent baronage to sue for peace.
Then from the master he had served so well
Claim'd as reward an opportune release.
The turmoil at his heart he could not quell,
His headstrong passion did the more increase.
True to the pledgéd hour of his return,
Once more his prow the frothy seas doth spurn.

LXXI

His heart sings louder than the shrilling gale,
 His bosom riots in the blustering breeze,
 His cheeks caress the lash of sleet and hail,
 His spirit soars beyond the thundering seas,
 His eager eyes peer thro' the watery veil
 For those white cliffs that can alone appease,
 His plunging prow spurns the deterrent blast,
 His full sail swells before the straining mast.

LXXII

He lands, and still he feels the rocking main
 Beneath his feet—or doth his stout heart fail?
 For honour to the last doth wildly strain
 Against ignoble love.—Ah, sad assail!
 For now his missive speeds to her amain
 To meet him in the shadow of the pale
 When night^oer all her sable shroud hath thrown.
 —And she on wings of love to him hath flown.

LXXIII

They met near by a pinewood's pillar'd shade :

O long and passionate their rapt embraces !

Night's orb ensilvers all the forest glade :

O paler than her beams their ashen faces !

Now tress on tress athwart his armour play'd,

While seaward sped his barb thro' moonlit spaces.

Now far, far out upon the glistening tide

These lovers in close-clasp'd enthrallment glide !

LXXIV

Then made they full amends for their lost days !—

Spirits that long had languish'd in suspense,

Now warm'd in the bright aura of Love's rays,

Flower'd, and drew life from every tingling sense—

He thrill'd with joy each time he met her gaze,

And sunn'd his soul in Love's vast opulence ;

She gather'd all the rapture to her heart,

And found in giving Love's diviner part.

LXXV

But Destiny swoop'd darkling on their course :
For as they drew anear the land of France,
A wind arose and swell'd to tempest force ;
Their sail was rent, and many a dire mischance
Shook those wild thralls o' the sea, while vain remorse
Unloosed slow tongues to surly utterance—
His leman dear should to the waves be thrown,
Thus only might they for such sin atone.

LXXVI

Sorely the knight chastised their cowardice :
He fell'd their leader, and his corpse did throw
To the ravening seas—a signal sacrifice,
That all might learn the way that traitors go.
But, when he turn'd to meet his love's dear eyes,
Their light was quench'd before that fateful blow.
Too late her heart divined that he was wed,
And with the knowledge her white soul had fled.

LXXVII

Still masterful, the unruly helm he seized,
 And by stout seacraft weather'd that fierce gale ;
 Yet noway could his anger be appeased
 Against the traitorous tongues that wrought his bale.
 Now vengeful chastisement his passion eased,
 Anon with stripes he did his own flesh flail.
 Distraught, he drave his vessel up the shore ;
 Then leaping, landward his pale burden bore.

LXXVIII

Now came to mind, as he rode sorrowing home,
 An hermit's sanctuary all husht and dim.
 There in the lonely forest is he come
 To rest her soul with lowly chaunt and hymn,
 Till skyward rise o'er all a silvery dome
 Which the pale moon should in her sessions brim.
 But when he came anigh that holy door
 The silent fane seem'd stiller than of yore.

LXXIX

And where that hoar recluse was wont to pray,
 The hillock of his everlasting rest
 Rose moist and miry from the new-turn'd clay—
 Not long had he rejoin'd the meek and blest.
 At that lone shrine the knight his love did lay,
 His crimson cloak about her silence press'd.
 Then unto the Great King and Lord of all
 In utter desolation did he call.

LXXX

' O Thou who fashion'd her so beautiful,
 Forgive the hapless love that wrought her doom!
 How could my soul its questing impulse rule
 Before a flower of such ethereal bloom!
 Thou, only Thou, canst my dark fault annul,
 Thou only canst speak comfort from the tomb!
 For where she is there also would I be,
 Save, Lord, I may not—till Thou cleanseest me.

LXXXI

' Her life was innocent—in thought and deed—
 Mine be the guilt, as mine the undying shame.
 Thou, in Thy wisdom, hast her pure soul freed :
 Never a maid to Thee more chastely came !
 Thou knowest my heart and its exceeding need—
 O pardon grant in Christ's most precious Name !
 And evermore throughout my length of days
 My penitence in stone to Thee I'll raise.'

LXXXII

Silent he kneels beside his muted dove,
 His crispéd locks white as the new fall'n snow ;
 And thrice he kiss'd the pale lips of his love,
 And thrice his hand caress'd the marble brow ;
 Then drew his silken scarf her face above,
 And all around did lenten lilies strow.
 Now with hung head, and sad, unhasting feet,
 Homeward he turns his wistful wife to greet.

LXXXIII

With lilting heart she heralds his return,
 And in rich vesture doth herself array ;
 Her veins run ichor, her sweet temples burn,
 While roseate blushes round her cheeks do play ;
 All shadowy doubts her joyous mind doth spurn—
 Will he not kiss her fondling fears away ?
 Once more to be close-haven'd in his arms
 Were recompense for many past alarms !

LXXXIV

But when she view'd his countenance o'er cast,
 His down-droopt eye, his hair all silvery white,
 A dreadful fear fell like an icy blast
 Upon her soul, and wither'd all delight.
 Thro' some fierce conflict her dear lord had pass'd,
 His pallid looks her wofully affright.
 Straight all her woman's heart went out to him,
 Her tender eyes bright tears of ruth bedim.

LXXXV

She did not press him with unwelcome speech—
 Silence is oft the only comforter !—
 She knew his soul toward hers must sometime reach,
 And that their spirits would at length confer.
 His loyalty she never would impeach :
 Never could he dismantle Truth for her.
 Her present wish she would in sooth forgo
 Till he should choose to unburden all his woe.

LXXXVI

Day after day went by, and still he fed
 On his own thought, and pined, and grieved the more.
 And she was told how all his journeyings led
 Thro' that lone forest to the hermit's door.
 He could not so lament his old friend dead ?
 And over this new wonder 'gan she pore.
 Till angerly the woman in her cried,
 ' Am I not shamed—thus long to be denied ? '

LXXXVII

So, ere the first pale flush of day appear'd,
She thro' that darksome forest wanly crept;
An old retainer whom her lord revered
Went with her, while the drowsy hamlet slept;
And when that lowly hermitage they near'd,
All tremblingly she thwart the threshold stept—
Where lo! before the altar, mute and still,
Beauty than marble lovelier and more chill!

LXXXVIII

No more she marvell'd that her lord was sad
When she beheld that face in death so fair.
For this was he in speechless woe yclad—
Her witchery had ta'en him unaware.
Such beauty might have driven the noblest mad,
Which even untenanted could still ensnare.
With poignant pity for her stricken lord,
Compassion dear did her meek heart accord.

LXXXIX

Now while she wept beside that lonely shrine,
A weasel ran from out the coverlet
That Guillardun's fair body did confine,
Which when her squire perceived, he straightway set
Himself to slay, and struck across the spine.—
One small life more, pass'd to man's monstrous
debt!—
Then flung the dead thing testily aside,
Ere his sweet mistress that rude stroke could chide.

XC

But soon astonishment their senses bound—
Its furry mate, returning from the wood,
Ran full upon its fellow's death-like swound,
And over the mute form immobile stood ;
Then task'd itself to solve that piteous wound,
Raising the listless head in 'wilder'd mood.
Eftsoons it scurried to a lonely heath,
And bore back with a red flower in its teeth.

XCI

This fragrant herb it forced upon the tongue
 Of its drowsed love, which rathly did revive
 And perkily upon her helpmate hung :
 He capers in high joy to see her live.
 Athwart the forest aisles they blithely sprung,
 Discarding the fair flower of Love's reprieve.
 A petal of that rosy amulet
 Between her rival's lips the lady set.

XCII

Who, waking as from sleep, bewilder'd gazed
 About the gloom-lit place in wan dismay ;
 Then dwelt upon that gentle dame amazed,
 And faintly came her voice from far away,
 'Some troublous dream hath all my senses dazed :
 Methought that in my winding sheet I lay,
 And that my love had ever me forsaken—
 O speak ! for thy soft eyes compassion waken.'

XCIII

Straight was she gather'd to that gentle breast
 Where precious tears in guileless pity fall.
 Then 'gan they rock their paining hearts to rest,
 And to each other clung as all in all.
 Fair Guillardun her maiden fears confest,
 Unwitting that her words were barb'd with gall;
 Her auditress, with countenance serene,
 'Neath veiling lids her own dull ache did screen.

XCIV

Now toward the dawn they glide with love-lock'd hands:
 One dark and stately as the forest pines,
 One fairer than the silver-streaming sands
 When in the waning heavens the light declines.
 The one the homage of all hearts commands,
 The other with a softer radiance shines.
 Shall the proud Rose, in widest empire set,
 Rob of one charm the sweet-lip'd Violet?

xcv

The mists disperse, and lo ! before their eyes,
 The sun's rays visualising scarp and tower,
 Sir Eliduc's broad battlements uprise ;
 The warming landscape glistens like a flower
 When on its vestments morn's first emerald lies ;
 The lark's blithe carol greets the matin hour ;
 On the boon air the hum and stir of life
 Proclaim another day of task and strife.

xcvi

Where kneels the knight, absorbed in silent prayer,
 With eyes enchain'd upon the glowing Cross ?
 In his husht oratory, unaware
 How near his gain, how nigh his livelong loss !
 The sunlight streams athwart his silver hair,
 And gilds the figures that his sword emboss.
 A hand is on his shoulder lightly laid—
 Lo ! yearning toward him leans his lily-maid !

XCVII

' Love, Guillardun ! this vision Christ assign'd
 In token of mercy and of sin abjured ;
 Yet had my soul for evermore repined
 Until of thee full pardon was procured.
 Now on thy lips there breathes a placid wind,
 Condoning that deep wrong thou hast endured.
 O kiss me once, tho' but in spirit-wise,
 Ere thou withdraw'st the heaven-light of thine eyes !'

XCVIII

' My lord, it is no vision thou beholdest,
 But her whom once thy passion did constrain ;
 Tho' thou for aye my heart in thine enfoldest,
 Apart we must embrace Love's glory and pain ;
 Return to her from whom thou now withholdest
 Love that is her sweet right and thy sure gain.
 Renunciation is our portion here,
 Let each be worthy of the cross we bear !'

XCIX

Life surged before them,—when a gentle voice
 Fell, like a chaunt from heaven, upon their souls :
 ‘ Ye twain shall in your deathless love rejoice,
 Since He who made our hearts, their need controls.
 Earth I renounce, to seek in sacrifice
 That Love which now and evermore consoles.
 Little is left save sweet humility
 To plead with the dear Christ for clemency.’

c

Years passed. And where that lowly hermitage
 Stood forest-screen’d, a Fane of Peace uprose
 Where desolate souls their sorrows might assuage.
 Its first loved Abbess her brief reign did close
 In deeds that live and lighten every Age.—
 In hands like hers God’s charities repose.—
 The knight long after wed his Guillardun.
 And love grown perfect did their days attune.

1906.

AMY ROBSART

AMY ROBSART

THE hour is late, yet streaks of light appear
Along the West, and fade, and glimmer there
With such enchantment in their still eclipse
Over the hills and valleys and the tips
Of many a forest at the horizon's brim,
That the dusk wardress of the twilight dim
Reluctant seems to close the gates of day.
No sound of life, no stir of leaf at play—
The world with all its voices is at rest,
Its fret and tumult fled into the West.

When hark ! a voice upon the Autumn air,
Flooding the night with music of despair,
So melancholy sweet, so full of woe—
Alas ! that Love should be requited so !
What tender longing ! What affection dear !
A woman's love, with all its hope and fear !
In every note the passion of a life,
In every note a soul too sweet for strife—
The hunger of a heart for ever fed
On love and hope, when hope and love are dead !

And what are these—these accents wild of grief?
And who the fair that sings her soul's relief?—
Who to the pitiless woods from her high tower
Doth chaunt love's requiem at evening hour,
While Cumnor's turrets fade along the sky,
And the wing'd mouse of twilight flitters by?
Sure such a voice was never heard in bower
Since Enid's heart awoke in Yniol's tower!
Sure never lady's face grief did so stain
Since Love bewitch'd the lily-maid Elaine!
The violets within these tender eyes
Had robb'd Queen Guinevere of Lancelot's sighs!

‘Leicester! my Leicester, could this voice of mine
Recall to thee thy duty, and these eyne
But show thee half the sorrow that I bear,
Since in thy thought I am no longer fair,
Or could mine arms thy wonted ardours fan
And thou but fold me to thy heart again,
I might forget the past, and learn to live
In memory of that thou once didst give—
The passion and the rapture of thy kiss,
That fatal ecstasy I took for bliss,
Those eyes whose magic wrought my mortal dole,
Which did enmesh my will, to snare my soul,

The subtle poison of thy matchless tongue,
On whose least accents I so fondly hung.
All, all must I forgo?—Ah, death to me,
The love I lived for can no longer be!
Now nevermore shall Spring-time bring me hope,
Nor Summer crown, nor Autumn gild life's slope,
But Winter—always Winter! bleak and cold,
Until I thread the Valley—sorrows told!

‘How happier were the days when young and free
I lisp’d my sorrows at a father’s knee,
When all my joys and all my griefs were his,
And every secret shared—save only this!
Ah, had I then, too foolish maid, given ear
To his brave counsel and monitions dear,
I might have stood, where I, impassion’d, fell—
And thou been victim, whom I loved too well!
Yet, Leicester! am I doom’d to love thee so,
Whose cruel scorn should trample out my woe?
Must fondness ever in my breast abide,
And hope of freedom perish with my pride?
Is it thy will my loving heart should be
Estranged from thine to all eternity?
Thou, whose first vows were sweet as manna dew,
Thy breathless kisses thrilling thro’ and thro’,

Whose every word some richer promise gave
That I should never ask, what now I crave.
“That Pyramids might crumble in the dust,
The stars be quench’d before the whirling gust,
The unfathom’d ocean and her seas run dry,
And mountains quit their mansions in the sky,
Ere breath of treason cloud a Dudley’s sword,
Or maiden skaith arraign his plighted word.”

‘So vehement his vows, till love was given !
Alas ! there is but one thing under Heaven
That never Dudley yet had strength to face—
Ambition is the curse of his proud race—
A prospect of advancement in the state,
And honour, virtue, truth itself might wait !
No Dudley ever question’d whom he slew
If end would justify the means—and few
Who cross’d his path their line of crossing knew !
A Dudley’s vengeance pierced where steel might fail
In days when poison lurk’d beneath the nail—
A glove, a letter, some such friendly token,
And, with the seal, the cords of life were broken !

‘But now a Virgin Queen had shown him grace,
Had praised him to the Court and to his face,

Had flatter'd him how far beyond his dreams,
Consulted him on all her monarch schemes.
With such a vista widening to his eyes,
What wonder that a Dudley list the prize !
What marvel that his love for Amy waned,
Where honour stood so sovranly constrain'd !
What vows would he not break, what love disown,
With but a step 'twixt freedom and the throne !
Oh, Memory ! wilt scald me with thy tears ?
Fain would I blot remembrance of the years !
From my soul's self myself I cannot save,
My only peace—the solace of the grave.

‘ O blinded one ! hast thou no strength within
To give thy life a sacrifice for sin,
To pray in some dim convent's cloistral shade
For peace—both to betrayer and betray'd,
That when we meet in that dear Home above
Our lives may there be perfected in love ? ’
So sang that Lady of her soul's despair,
Making low moan upon the midnight air,
And with faint sobs her tender hands of grief
She stretch'd to God—and found in Him relief.

Now morning rose on other hills and towers,
And kiss'd fair Windsor's streams and shady bowers—
Here all was joyance, hastenings to and fro,
Here hounds were baying in the court below,
And horses champ'd the bit, and hearts ran high
'Mid eager questions if the scent would lie.
The Queen herself would view the kingly sport
With all the splendour of that Virgin Court,
The noble Earl of Leicester at her side,
Like to a prince in his imperious pride :
The Earl—the envy of all gallant men,
The Queen—what maid had not been Countess then ?

So all that morn by forest, lake, and fen,
Where Nature wound by many a secret glen,
Where every voice that trill'd from brake and bough
Did love's impassion'd tenderment avow,
The Queen and Leicester rode—and with them shame
Of that sweet trouble neither dared to name,
And yet their eyes too often met to fear
What each from either came attuned to hear,
What each had waited month by month to tell,
What each of either but divined too well !

At length the Queen broke silence—yet with voice
So tremulous, it seem'd to mock her choice—
'Leicester, this day of grace must be our last,
Its radiance draws now to the treasured past.
Thy Amy pines for thee—to her be true,
Else wilt thou make sure misery for two.
Monarch of this wide realm, this heart so great,
We must remain the mistress of our fate.
Love comes and goes : it leavens awhile our lot,
And, like the rose, is all too soon forgot !'

'Love comes but once, my Queen, and like the
rose

Its fragrance lingers with us till life's close !'
Despoil me of my honours, rank, and fame,
And all my service done in thy dear name,
But doom me not to shades of endless night,
I cannot live an outcast from the light !
I never loved before ! Be this my vow,
How much my soul is perill'd by thee now.
Elizabeth ! thou must, thou shalt be mine !
Love owns no law but what is all-divine.
Fate calls us ! Fate is calling thee and me—
Yield, and I consecrate my life to thee !'

‘No, Dudley, no!—it shall not—may not be.
 Were our heart’s choice undiadem’d and free,
 We had not exiled happiness,—nor stood
 Aloof in cold, majestic solitude.’

* * * * *

Ah, Night ! prolific author of all ill,
 Whose misbegotten progeny doth fill
 Palace and dungeon, hovel and hut of the poor,
 Adventuring shame and vice from door to door—
 How long wilt thou bedarken and betray,
 Disrobe the vestal, and the meek dismay ?

‘Varney, to horse !—despatch her as thou wilt,
 Yet see thou leave behind no track of guilt !
 Should once suspicion hap upon my name,
 Liker were I to wed the block than fame !
 “The wrath of Kings is as a flaming fire,”
 And Tudor blood was never slow to ire,—
 Our Sovereign Lady hath for all her smiles
 A hint of Nilus in her serpent wiles !
 Let not thy right hand to thy left reveal
 The fateful task that shall thy service seal.’

Dark is the night, but not more dark than dread,
 While heavy looms the tempest overhead,

Mephitic vapours roll along the ground,
And murder, muffled, haunts in every sound.—
A pause, for the fierce wind to gather breath.—
But now the thunder breaks the ban of death
With rattling bursts which rend the very skies ;
Now the sheer darkness opens to our eyes
And all the terrors of the storm lie bare !—
Weird and fantastic demons of the air,
Abhorrent imps, deform'd with deadly sin,
Dance, and make riot o'er the village Inn,
While Cumnor towers are wrapt in lambent fire,
As round them sweep the storm-fiends in their ire !

And many a watch-dog howl'd that night from fear,
And many a maiden wish'd her lover near,
And many a gable-end was cleft in twain,
And many an oak lay shatter'd on the plain :
And ever as the wind went moaning by
It wail'd with burden of a mortal cry—
And still that plaintive cry sobs down the years—
' Dudley, I do absolve thee through my tears !'

NATURE POEMS

INVOCATION TO THE MUSES

AWAKE ! ye tuneful Nine, and sing
The budding glories of the Spring.
Awake ! and sweep each sounding lyre,
Breathe on the strings celestial fire !
Euterpe first, with her soft flute,
Shall bid the whistling winds be mute,
And after her let each in turn
Reveal the thoughts that inward burn.
And you, ye Nymphs, that haunt the grove,
Whose only travail is to love,
Who all night long in revel gay
Prolong the scenes ye shun by day,
And, circling round your Fairy Queen,
In sprightly dance rejoice unseen,
Awake ! and on transparent wing
Swell the brave chorus of the Spring !

The children of the awakening Year
Are worthy of your tenderest care ;

The first to greet you every day,
 And spread their incense in your way,—
 Impearl'd in robes of transient lawn,
 The delicate foldings of the dawn,—
 Each little face o'erbrimm'd with joy,
 And blushing like a maiden coy.
 And when the sun with orient wings
 His glittering splendour round them flings,
 No jewel from the pearly seas,
 No wavelet flick'd before the breeze,
 E'er shed upon the freshening brine
 Such lustre as their dewy eyne.

* * * * *

1888.

THE SPRING MINSTRELS

THRUSH

HARK ! how the welkin rings,
 Trembling with glee !
 Hark ! how the Mavis sings,
 Changing his key !
 Bird of the dapple-gray !
 Warbling from topmost spray,—
 What bard durst fling to-day
 Challenge to thee ?

BLACKBIRD

Merle to his mate doth call,
 ‘Springtime is near !
Flute-like his accents fall,
 Blithesome his cheer !
Never so true a note
Down the soft wind did float
From so divine a throat
 Of such a seer !

LARK

Queen of the azure sky !
 Whose dew-lapp’d home
Green blades, or wheat, or rye,
 Serve for a dome.—
Soaring with spiral flight
High o’er the realms of sight,
Rapt in thy song’s delight,
 Where dost thou roam ?

LINNET

Brown wings flash in and ou ,
 Winnow the wind.—
Lovers, without a doubt,
 Rapture enshrined !

Flitting from tree to tree,
Filling my soul with glee,
Linnet, thy melody
Is wondrous kind !

ROBIN

Robin, my winter friend,
Robin, my Robin !
Did all thy music end
When winds were sobbing ?
Fetter'd to vain regret,
Is thy bright soul afret ?
Surely the Spring can set
Thy heart a-throbbing ?

CHAFFINCH

Chaf'st thou at my approach ?
Shelfie, refrain !
Never could I encroach
On thy domain.
Bird of the flashing plume !
Piercing the days of gloom,
Thy mossy nest resume,
Fearless of bane

THE ROOKS

Cradled in sunset glows,
Rock'd by the storm !
Far from your fellest foes,
Chaunting Life's psalm.
Happy community !
Builted of Unity.—
Dawn's importunity
Is Evening's calm.

1889.

SUNSHINE AND SHOWER

I

Blow soft, ye winds, from out the South,
Breathe low, as from the All-Mother's mouth,
And whisper to this darksome heart
Tidings She only can impart,
Tidings which, at a Mother's knee,
Hold both of heaven and earth the key—
Dim shadowings of the vision'd truth
Reveal'd in sweet, far days of Youth.

Waft, waft, ye winds, come waft me o'er
Rich incense from your vernal store—
The hot scent of the odorous pine,
The breezy gorse, like perfumed wine,
That rambling over hill and dale
With thankful heart I may inhale
Spring's balmy fragrance.

II

Inconstant Dame ! hast changed so soon
The sunny garb of yesternoon ?
Shall moody frowns thy charms efface,
Like wayward children out of grace ?
Or do thy dear inconstancies
Expound some riddle of the skies ?—
That cloud and sunshine, wind and shower,
Are gifts alike of equal dower,
Forces obedient to His will
Who spreads the feast of the daffodil.
Then haste thy mandate to obey !
Lead on thy legions to the fray !—
The warring winds, the misted rain,
The hail-storm driving o'er the plain,
In cloudy dissonance !

III

Hark ! thunder warns—the wakeful hare
Now hasteneth to her grassy lair,
While Heaven's high flood-gates, open'd wide,
Pour forth the deluge tide on tide,
And leaping fires of varied form
Reveal the grandeur of the storm !
Not now the feather'd tribe delight
In lyric love, or whirring flight :
'Mid covert close of oak and ash,
Their colour'd pennons cease to flash.
While the bright sun's resplendent rays
Are veil'd beneath a spectral haze.
When, lo ! a symbol from on high,
A Rainbow throws across the sky
Her peaceful radiance !

1888,

AN EQUATORIAL SUNSET

THE sun has set—and sea and sky are blending
In tints of purple, amaranth, and gold,
While fretted clouds which stretch in line unending
New harmonies of light and shade unfold.

Like a young bride with cheeks incarnadined,
The crimson main droops deepening every hour.
Spiced with the breath of many a twilight flower,
Steals on the shadowy dusk the soft night wind,
Bringing forgetfulness of place and time.
Lo ! from her bed of waters, gleaming white
'Mid soft unveilings of translucent light,
Fair Venus rises vestally sublime,
And down the jewell'd splendour of the sky
Clouds with remembrance many a lover's eye !

1890.

EVENING AT SEA

A PERFECT night !—a night of calm at sea,
In all its grace and all its purity !
And not a sound, save where the glittering spray
Quivers in emerald furrows round our way.
Myriads of little stars, divinely fair,
Peer shimmering thro' the vestures of the night ;
So many handmaidens their torches bear
To tend her steps who is the Queen of Light !
Now, from the furthest disc, comes proudly forth
Diana, in chaste coronal of snow,

Pale as the daylight in the frozen North,
Yet zoned with sympathy, as lovers know,
For, as she mellows with each darkening hour,
Their linked hearts confess her gracious power.

1891.

TO MAY

MAY, like a maiden soft and fair,
With pink-white blossoms in her hair,
Trippingly foots the verdant mead,
Conscious of none, so all take heed.

To her wend lovers, old and young,
With hearts new-kindled and lyres new-strung,
To list once more her sweet command,
And crave some boon at her fair hand.

The Cuckoo clamours down the wind
To every listener he can find ;
And little birds, from brake and bough,
Her, Queen of all the months, allow.

The Chestnut and the Hawthorn vie
Whose blossoms shall outmatch the sky,
Where soft and fleecy clouds unfold
New realms of wonder spann'd with gold.

Now mounts the Lark his spiral throne
To wing the firmament alone,
And flood the hollow vault of Heaven
With music not to mortals given.

Maiden of Months ! to thee I bring
This simple tribute of the Spring—
Content, if in thy smiles I see
A glimpse of what thy love might be !

THE RING-DOVE

'MID beechy umbrage, bosky dell,
'Tis there the Ring-dove loves to dwell,
And thro' the still, deep hush of noon
His plaintive melodies to croon.

Like moonbeams on a silent pool,
His liquid notes flow soft and cool ;
Like plashing waters heard at even,
So falls his voice on hearts bereaven.

Not here the upward-soaring lark
With quivering throat can pierce the dark ;
The Nightingale might sing in vain
Within the Ring-dove's hush'd domain.

Sweet Bird ! thy mate along the bough
Listens to thy so ardent vow :
She will console that woe of thine,
But, ah, my mistress heeds not mine !

Thy song is like a summer dream
Beside some gently-rilling stream—
A vale where fever'd hearts may rest
In sanctuaried oblivion blest.

Amid the lush and waving grass
I watch the shadows as they pass,
And in thy leafy covert find
Brief solace for my wounded mind.

THE GAME-KEEPER'S DAUGHTER

(KATE BOLT, AGED ELEVEN, IN CHARGE OF HER
LITTLE BROTHER)

'GEORGIE, whom do you love best?'

'Kittie,'—comes the arch reply.

Baby lips are wildly prest,

Dimpled arms are flung on high.

Georgie's love, I fear, will fade,

Sissie's too will some day wane

He will claim another maid,

She some simple, loving swain.

Yet to me their tender loves

Bear the seal of Heaven's impress,

When the spirit swiftly moves

At a little maid's caress.

TWILIGHT

O MYSTIC Hour! when day and night

Seem spell-bound by the fading light,

When hill and valley, dale and grove,

Throb with the immanence of Love.

Recumbent on her couch of pine,
With languorous grace and dewy eyne,
The Queen of Heaven¹ doth now unfold
Her fatal beauty, limn'd in gold.

Whilst on the air the bat's bent wings
Add witchery to earthly things,
As, sailing with uneven flight,
He mocks the shadows of the night.

Now doth my spirit feel a part
Of The Great Universal Heart
That beats in bird and beast and flower,
Proclaiming their Immortal Dower !

THE COTTAR'S SONG

HERE the birds still chirp and twitter
In November days,
Flitter, glitter, sweet and bitter,
—Little brief, brief lays !

¹ The Planet Venus.

City streets may brim with morsels,
Rich and dainty fare ;
But for them the cottage door-sills
And the sky-sweet air !

Better half a crumb with gladness
In the light of day,
Than a feast with pale-faced sadness
Brooding o'er the way !

O to feel the warmth of Heaven
As it purely flows,
—Feel that it is freely given,
Straight from God's own brows !

Not for us the City's glamour,
Its adulterate wine—
Hectic flush, and noisy clamour
Of a World supine.

VICISSITUDE

O BLITHE and bonny ! when woods are green,
And winds breathe soft and low,
To sit beneath the budding Thorn,
With lilting hearts aglow.

Thus, in the morning of our life,
We sing of Hope and Love,
With quest and chivalry before
And halcyon skies above.

But when the woods are sere and brown,
The land in furrows laid,
How soon the Spring-tide is forgot !
How soon the Hawthorn shade !

So, in the evening of our days,
When the light dies down within,
We reck not of the wild, wild rose
And the lanes we loiter'd in !

We wander in a world distraught
And ban the biting East,
Forgetful that the sap will rise
To spread a richer feast.

Ah, but the feast is not the same !
Those half-averted eyes
Will fill with tears of vain regret
As other Springs arise.

The Autumn now holds more of Hope,—
Hope at her heart doth sing,—
Our eyes once more are forward bent
Unto no earthly Spring !

ODE TO THE SWALLOW

I

Thou bringest Summer on thy steel-blue pinions !
Whom laughter-loving April could not lure
From thy sun-girdled, over-sea dominions,
The maiden May,¹ with drooping lids demure,

¹ In 1902 the swallows did not appear in the North of England till May, owing to the late and boisterous Spring.

Hath drawn : and all her opening heart is thine,
Full of the fragrance of expanding buds,
The bourgeoning and bridals of the year.
Winter, so long delay'd through storm and shine,
Gives place at last—for see thy helpmate scuds
Along the meads ! Summer—Summer is here !

II

Tho' few thy seasons, still thy magic gleaning
Hath taught thee April lingers into May ;
But who hath taught the mystery and meaning
Of the vex'd wind and variable way ?
Over the passage of the lonesome deep
Thou wing'st secure, to rear thy callow broods
In shelter of our close-projecting eaves,
To watch and ward their heavy-lidded sleep.
So the still mind, through thy maternal moods,
Nature's undeviating course perceives.

III

O blithe of heart ! O grace and gladness bringing !
Lo ! at thy coming, Spring to Summer yields.
O happy swallow ! thro' the meadow winging
Thy joyous flight above the freshening fields.

So long as thou art with us, we may feel
The end of life is not some fretful goal
But rest i' the eye of Nature—each tired head
Laid where her soft caresses gently steal.
But when thy far broods congregate, the soul
Low whispereth, 'Summer—Summer is fled!'

IOLAIRE

LINES WRITTEN IN THE NORTH SEA ON BOARD

THE S.Y. *IOLAIRE*

I

THIS was the land that the Norseman plough'd!
Here lay his furrows, there his shroud.
A thousand years . . . Oh, what are they?—
But the romance of yesterday!
Iolaire! Iolaire!
Dance in the moonbeams free and fair.
Thou art a Viking's chosen bride,
Speed-away, speed-away over the tide!

II

And these same streamers that we chase
Have tost their foam in the Viking's face.

A thousand years . . . And the rolling billow
Will rest our sons on the Norseman's pillow !

Iolaire ! Iolaire !

Shake out the moonbeams from thy hair !

Scatter thy jewels on the tide,

For thou art a Viking's joy and pride !

III

Breeze of the Norland ! fresh and strong,

Blow us a stave of the Viking's song :

One short hour of the Norseman's quest—

The Celtic maid with her snow-white breast.

Iolaire ! Iolaire !

The stars are bright, and the night is fair,

Whilst over the moonlit waters wide

The phantom hosts of the Norsemen glide.

TO THE NIGHTJAR

WHEN the moon hangs high in the heavens,

And the evening star shines bright,

The purr of the Nightjar leavens

The music of the night.

It speaks of the soft caresses
That Summer gave to June.
His murmurous voice impresses
The magic of the moon.

Past hill and dale it leadeth,—
Now far, now very near,—
While note to note succeedeth
More passionately clear.

O joy for the happy lover
To find, as he nears his bliss,
The song of the Nightjar cover
A maid's too-transient kiss!

While spirit with spirit blendeth,
The wheel-bird¹ carols low;
Anon the vale he rendeth
With the fulness of his woe.

And in those deep embraces
He seems to bear a part—
In quiet, woodland places
Where heart clings close to heart.

¹ So called from the resemblance of the Nightjar's purr to that of a spinning-wheel in motion.

Lips that the day did sever,
Spirits by song set free,
Now meet like an unchain'd river
As it mingles with the sea.

Whilst thro' and thro' their gladness
There thrills the Nightjar's song,
And to such old-world madness
He croons the whole night long.

Bird of the high-midsummer !
Silent, and swift, and shy,
Linger awhile, sweet hummer,
Beneath our northern sky.

For the lands of the South shall hear thee
When our nights are long and chill ;
But my heart will be cold and dreary
Till thy song comes over the hill.

THE HARVEST OF THE HAY

I

O GOLDEN Joys of Summer! O days and nights in
June!

O freshness of the morning! O radiance of noon!

O the subtle scents of evening! O the shadows in
the lane

When the moonlight floods each arching bough with
amethystine rain!

II

O happy days of Summer, when the mowers mow
all day!

O the jocund shouts of children amid the tumbled
hay!

The oldest and the youngest a-working with a will,
As the big, broad sun goes shouldering the church-
tower from the hill.

III

O first-fruits of the Summer! O pathways bright with
flowers!

O the redolence of roses amid the dreaming hours!

O days of golden rapture ! O nights perfumed with
sighs !

O the boon grace of living when Eden round us lies !

THE SOU' WESTER

(BLOWING OVER THE OVERTON HILLS, CHESHIRE)

BLUSTERING, boisterous wind, that bloweth over the
bracken,

Rending the knotted oak, and tearing the stalwart
pine,

Never for one short pause do thy wild coursers slacken,
Hurrying, scurrying by, with slashing sting of the
brine.

Roaring, and rolling along with the force of the full
Atlantic,

Bending the fern-leaf'd beech, and breaking the
poplar's pride,

Driving the giant chiefs and lords of the forest frantic,
Writhing their mighty limbs in tortuous circles wide.

On over boulder and crag, with a fury that brooks no
negation,
Bellowing back to the blast, booming aloud to the
vale,
Now like the sweep of a scythe, as it moweth in close
serration,
Now like the rush of a torrent, lash'd white with
wintry hail.

On over bracken and ling, over bilberry, gorse, and
heather,
Raying their silvery sides in the light of the wester-
ing sun,
On over bramble and broom where the tall grasses
blow together,
On ! 'in the joy of battle, in the armour of victories
won.

Quieted now are the million, murmurous voices of
Summer,
Only the thud of the surf in the beat of a surging sea,
Whilst over above the gale the voice of the fierce
Oncomer,
'I am the breath of a Spirit that wandereth ever
free !'

SUNDOWN

SOUNDS of the day come out distinct and clear,
While children's voices break the muffled roar
That rises from the village. Evermore
The babble of birds falls on the dreaming ear.
The ring-dove gurgles from a coppice near,
The lark flits low above his wheaten floor,
And, tired of climbing, seeks his nestlings four,
While swallows cleave the laden atmosphere.

The bloom of fruit is on the distant firs,
The valley films with soft and fleecy spray,
The breeze but fans the face, and dies away,
And not a leaf within the forest stirs.
The sun goes down upon the throbbing air,
And leaves the hills more silent than they were.

A DULL DAY IN SEPTEMBER

A MELANCHOLY wind moans all the day ;
At intervals comes the warm pelt of rain,
Then lifts to fleck the heavens with many a stain,
While little torrents tear their ribbéd way

The sky is dun, with leaden rifts and gray ;
The hurrying clouds break 'neath the veering
strain,
And limpid isles of blue appear amain,
To lose themselves in leagues of billowy spray.

So on toward Evening, when the conquering Sun
Rolling the beaten foe before his face,
And breaking up his forces one by one,
Completes his victory o'er time and space,
And, on the field he hath so hardly won,
Calls off his glittering legions from the chase.

LOVE POEMS

LOVE'S GOLDEN PILGRIMAGE

To one who loves, all things are beautiful—
Love colours every thought, and on his wings
Doth bear those tender, sweet imaginings
That stir the soul to depths most dutiful.
The merry clangour of the Bells at Yule,
The Cuckoo's trumpet-call, when first it rings
On unaccustom'd ears,—and earlier Springs
Hallow with light life's darkening vestibule,—
Are harbingers of Love, but Love grants more
Than all the wealth of Nature can bestow,
For he who loves, hath of Love's boundless store
A heart, a mind, whose riches overflow,
A spirit that immersed in Love's deep lore
Perceives in Nature things unseen before.

THE LITTLE ARCHER

DEFTLY the little Archer plies
His shafts of light,—
Thou canst not hold him in disguise,—
Ambush'd within those lidded eyes,

He revels in his victories
Till set of night.

And Love and Laughter hide and seek
Where lilies vie—

They chase the sunbeams o'er each cheek,
And ripple low, like waves that break
Upon the shingle of a lake,
Until they die.

And Love enkindles at thy voice,
And hovers near—

The Love that crowns a maiden's choice,
The Love that makes a heart rejoice,
The Love that fills all sacrifice
In sigh or tear.

LOVE'S SLEEPLESSNESS

I CAN no more mine eyes to sleep compose,
And thou alone sweet orb of my unrest !
Yet think not I would shrive thee from my breast,
Nor lose one pearl of grief thy love bestows.

Whilst thou, close-shelter'd like a folded rose,
In spirit realms immeasurably blest,
Art dreaming of a love thy tears caress'd,
Unwistful of thy lover and his woes.

Oh, would that I might tend thy tranquil sleep,
And guard the passage of thine incensed breath !—
To dwell upon thy breast's entrancing steep
Were all of Heaven, and too much of Death—
The heart that once had beat so near to thine
Would stop for aye if sever'd from its shrine !

MY LADYE

'Tis not that my Ladye hath bountiful hair—
Those deep-scented tresses, which lovers declare
Are the first of Love's charms and the breath of its air.

'Tis not that my Ladye hath wonderful eyes,
Whose depth is the ocean, whose zenith the skies,
Whose harmonies wake in the kingdom of sighs.

'Tis not that my Ladye is sweet as the Rose,
When the dews of the morning its freshness disclose,
Or while it more fragrantly sinks to repose.

'Tis not that my Ladye is tender and kind,
That the queenliest of virtues are blissfully shrined
In the grace of her speech, in the charm of her
mind.

Then why doth my Ladye my homage compel?—
When a maid holds the keys of high heaven and of
hell,
'Twere vain to resist her, 'twere rash to rebel!
And so, past redemption, I love her.

SORROW'S THRONE

WHY are friends like summer showers,
As fresh as they are fleeting?
Why are friends like all sweet flowers
That die within the greeting?

As Summer pales with Time's alloy,
Our fairest hopes deceive us—
And so with Friendship's transient joy,
It blooms but to bereave us!

THE WOODLAND WAY

I

WHEN the glowworms trim their lanterns
And the dusk is fair as day,
When every Jill to her Jan turns
With lips that pout and say,—
Say charily, say warily,
O men, you are not clever,
Say airily, say fairily,
To take our No for Never.

II

When the nightjar thrills the gloaming
With his undulating lay,
While lads and lasses roaming
Turn in the wildwood way,—
Say cheerily, say dearly,
Love knows the woodland blisses,
Say eerily, say wearily,
Love tires at last of kisses.

CIRCLES OF AFFINITY

I

SING hey ! for the fields of old Romance
And a life that is truly living.
Sing ho ! for the eyes that round us glance
And a kiss that is worth the giving.

II

Love is a circle, so men say,
And circle in circle twining
Advances a spark from the wheel of day
That will last till the sun's declining.

III

Should circle in circle coalesce,
The joy of that close communion
Is the innermost heart of the hours that bless
The rapture of earthly union.

IV

But circle so seldom its circle meets,
Or the segments so slightly cover,
That rarely, oh rarely, the circle greets
The soul of its heart's true lover !

V

With Space for a circle, the Stars and Time
Are all in their orbits moving,
Each swinging in circuit so sublime
That the Godhead needs no proving.

VI

Then hey ! for the fields of old Romance,
The soul of our soul pursuing ;
And ho ! for the eyes that round us glance
And a heart that is worth the wooing.

THE ISLAND OF DREAMS

'Tis a close-shelter'd Island—the Island of Dreams !
Where Love, like the murmur of far-away streams,
Doth lull with its music, doth gild with its beams.

'Tis an Island of refuge ! An Island of calm !
Where the weary are rested, and life has a charm
That may seldom be found in this world of alarm.

'Tis an Island of worship ! An Island of light !
Where the soft, quiring stars are transcendently bright,
And the Moon is the Queen of that Island of Night.

'Tis an Island of pleading—so tender and low,
That the heart in its rapture is fain to forgo
The round of its duties, the round of its woe.

'Tis the Isle of all Isles !—where grief and unrest
Are hush'd on the surge of the All-mother's breast,
Where hearts that are broken, again are made blest.

LOVE'S BURDEN

ALL my longing, since first I beheld thee,
My lips in three words would convey.—
Dare we build on the ruin of Honour ?
Dare we hope—with God's Angels away ?

Oh, what if I never may tell thee,
And die with the burden I bear !
Wilt thou value the friendship I gave thee,
The silence that cost me so dear ?

And so in our hearts we must cherish
The secret that makes life divine.

And, when in the dawning we perish,
God mingle thine ashes with mine !

THE STAR OF HOPE

Love is not Love that can admit despair !
For Love is born of Hope, and Hope is fair ;
With that sole Star to light the pilgrim's way,
No life were loveless, tho' Love say him ' Nay.'

What tho' the World may pass him by with scorn,
Life without Love were surely more forlorn !
He that hath look'd upon Love's guiding Star,
Knows that it never sets—but burns afar !

Tho' Love shall never here his guerdon find,
Love leaves his own sweet recompense behind ;
For but to love—is to forget the while
Griefs that no Time can ever reconcile.

THE WHITE POPPY

Like a shimmering poppy, robed in white,
With sashes and bows of palest green,
A very woman of soft delight !
Yet moulded as the flowers have been.

Eyes golden-brown, and deep as true,
Bespeak a mind to calmness given,
A soul wherein a man may view
The sovran sanctities of Heaven.

When she doth smile, lights it as tho'
Pale shadowy moonbeams brim her lips
And scatter there an argent glow
That never suffereth eclipse.

Those treasured hands that lie superb
Upon the foldings of her gown,—
O beating heart ! how can I curb
The folly thou wouldst make me own ?

For thou wouldst her sweet trust requite
With fervours of the sun-lash'd South ;
Thou, the arch-traitor ! wouldst invite
A lordlier trespass on her mouth.

O that her lips might closer steal,
Droop yet a little nearer mine !
Till life upon its axis reel
With kisses maddening more than wine !

LOVE'S RULE

How soon hath sped this fadeless summer day !
This golden link in our twin destinies !
This chain of bliss, welded of deeper ties
Than any yet divulged 'neath Friendship's sway.
Neither will lightly let it pass away ;
And, as a dream long cherish'd never dies,
Its fond memorials will renew our sighs
When Winter's thoughts wander in fields of May.

So shall we blissfully from life decline,
Knowing that we have tasted to the full
The cup that other lips have deem'd divine—
The cup we drain'd in nectarous draughts and
cool !
And may Love's rosy garlands here enshrine
The Day we first submitted to Love's Rule !

THE JEWELS OF DAWN AND OF DUSK

I

LIKE a diamond on a roseleaf when the dew has
 gemm'd the flower,
Like the first faint flush of sunrise stealing over stream
 and tower,
Like the palest light of evening, darkly deep'ning
 every hour,
So the jewels of dawn and dusk meet in thine eyes.

II

Like a brook that purls and ripples ever with a silvery
 sound,
Like the chime of distant sleigh-bells tinkling over
 frosty ground,
Like a soft-toned *Stradivarius* breathing on a spirit-
 wound,
So cadenced falls the music of thy voice.

III

Like the whiteness of the hawthorn when the summer
 months are near,
Like the warmth of tender nestlings zoned within a
 mossy sphere,

Like the bounty of the gorse-bloom that engarlands
all the year,
So boon to bless, thy love-enladen hands.

IV

Like the tints that fall at sunset on a cloudlet's
drifting snow,
Like the flash of crimson streamers when the Alpine
ridges glow,
Like the blossoms of the almond, like the petals of
the sloe,
So blush and pale the roses of thy cheeks.

V

Like the dawn to one immuréd in a dungeon cold and
grim,
Like the faint, far hope of Summer breaking over
woodlands dim,
Like soft moonlight on the waters when it floods the
ocean's brim,
So steals upon a darken'd heart thy smile.

IANTHE

IANTHE ! could thy name express
The unwhisper'd hope my soul conceals,
Why, from my voice thou then might'st guess
More of my heart than speech reveals.

No other homage need I pay,
All vows find utterance in thy name,
A thousand things it seems to say
That thee, and thee alone, proclaim.

In those three syllables doth flow
A music that is passing sweet,
All other notes are lost below
Until within thy name they meet.

And whether by the brooklet's side,
Or by the shallow, murmuring weir,
In the soft hush of eventide,
Thy name alone floats on my ear.

Or in the silence of the night
If thy dear name my sleep invade,
I wake to clasp a brief delight—
I wake to find the vision fade.

ATTAR OF ROSES

LIKE the petals of the Rose
When the dews their scent disclose,
Soft as velvet tho' they be,
Fragrant of the Dawn and thee,
Yet thy lips are sweeter far
Than all garden Roses are.

Once I thought my life supreme,
Bedded in a Rose's dream,—
Scent of Attar on my lips,
Nectar that the brown bee sips,—
Yet I never knew before
What sweet scents thy lips could store !

This, above that carmine wave,
Was the soft response they gave—
Fading fast before my touch,
Never yielding overmuch !
Now I have no peace of mind
Till thy lips again I find.

LOVE'S ONENESS

(TO A LADY WHO COMPLAINED THAT OTHERS WERE
NEGLECTED FOR HERSELF)

IF I had loved thee less, I had been free
To smile when others smiled—to hope, or fear,
And lend to each such silent sympathy
As well might prove a friend was listening near.
But, loving thee, I have no eyes to see
What others see, or feel as others feel.
I have no thoughts that are not part of thee,
And all my sweets from thoughts of thee I steal.
By day, by night, a presence everywhere,
Thy mirror'd loveliness in all I find.
O task me not in others' thoughts to share,
Who cannot turn from thee my tranced mind!
Thus, loving thee far more than aught beside,
My world is lost,—yet thou dost merely chide!

LOVE'S BITTERNESS

WHY should I love, where others would despise?
Why idly hope thou still may'st love me best?—
When every act doth wear a bold disguise,
And other friendships seem to stir thy breast!

And yet, to look but once within those eyes,
So darkly beautiful, so purely true,
I, for my doubts, can but myself chastise,
Who could of thee such bitter thoughts review.
Have I no meed of dignity or pride
That I must fall to thinking foul of thee?
Shall jealous fears with my strong love abide?
Shall others' faith fix bounds of faith for me?
No, tho' mine eyes should tell me thou hadst lied,
Their light I'd quench to prove thy constancy!

TELL HER, SWEET THRUSH!

O THOU sweet bird in the hazel tops,
Piping high, piping low, piping clear!
O thou sweet bird in the hazel tops,
Pipe to me of my dear!

Thou canst make love to her better than I,
Thrush, O Thrush of my heart!
Blending thy notes with the blue of the sky,
While the cloudlets drift apart.

Call to her now from the fields of thy grace,
Name her by wood and stream !
Tell her, I long to see her face
Within the moonlight gleam.

Tell her, sweet Thrush, of the grief that has lain
For six long months at my breast,
Tell her, sweet Thrush, of my endless pain—
Of the burden of my unrest.

And if, of her grace, she would pity give
—Pity from her heart's core,
Tell her, by that one word I'll live
And love for evermore !

THRO' THE PASS OF LLANBERIS

You . . . at the end of the valley !
Storm-wrack and cloud before—
Thro' the wild pass of Llanberis
To the gleam of a tranquil shore.

So, thro' the gulfs of sorrow,
Thro' anguish of heart and mind,
One only hope to my journey,
One haven of peace I find.

Yet—if that hope should fail me,
That home in the valley fair,
Alone, 'mid the wastes of the mountains,
Must I wrestle with despair !

IF LOVE WERE ALL

(SUGGESTED BY THE 'PRISONER OF ZENDA')

If Love were all, then might not thou and I
Seek out some plot of Earth before we die,
And live and breathe into each other's being
The happiness which seems beyond our seeing ?

If Love were all, then might I take thy hand
—Fearless of Fate, so thou and Love command !
How poor soe'er thy lot, no cloud could be
Too big that did encompass thee and me !

If Love were all, then on that all I'd cast
My life, my honour—all that Fame holds fast ;
For, O my love ! how could I give thee less ?
How set close bounds to Love's divine excess ?

But Love is only Love when it doth bind
Hearts to themselves, with Godhead intertwined.
If I should yield, my love—Ah, tempt me not,
Lest in my blinding need God were forgot !

HAVE WE NOT MET

HAVE we not met, and must we weep
Because our paths divide ?
Have we not climb'd by crag and steep
Love's summit, side by side ?
Our sun, if we had never met,
In passionless content had set.

Have we not met, and can we find
No solace of our pain ?

Tho' much in parting were resign'd,
Doth nothing sweet remain ?
Thou wouldst not we had never met,
And thou been spared this wild regret ?

Have we not met—and loved the more
This Eden-earth of ours?
And shall we not to God restore
This flower of all His flowers?
While in a happier Eden set
Our love shall bloom beyond regret.

MY SILVER MOON

As the moon with silver streaming
Laves the wilder'd world of night,
So thine eyes in pity gleaming
Flood my darken'd soul with light.

AT PARTING

SHE caught my eyes and held them with her own :
There might I read what speech would not betray,
What human lips could never yet convey—
The language that the heart must speak alone.
In that brief moment was her spirit known :
All the fierce doubts of many an anguish'd day,
Pure from that radiance, pass'd in light away ;
Love robed and crown'd was to full stature grown !

Bravely she faced me in that mute farewell,
Proudly, yet pale, with virginal control,
One look that made my heart's blood surge and swell,
And then again sweet mastery of the whole.
Unalterable love—ah, who can tell?
Yet from my Pisgah I had view'd her soul!

INTO THE SHADOW

Back again into the Shadow—after the Sun!
So thro' the Valley of Sorrow is Victory won.
Into the tunnell'd dark plunges Life's roaring car,
But the gradual gloom grows less as God's daylight
breaks afar.

LOVE'S CROSS AND CROWN

1

Dost thou miss me, Heart of mine?
Doth thy soul its fellow know?
Is my sorrow also thine?
Doth the inward trouble grow?

II

Do the morning sunbeams wake
Hopes to which the heart *must* cling,
The alternate joy and ache
That another day will bring ?

III

As, between each kindling thought,
Vistas of the treasured past
Thro' dim avenues have caught
Glory all too bright to last.

IV

Then the vacancy, the void,
Where no love-wind ever blew !
And oh, the darkness unalloy'd
I' the gulf betwixt us two !

V

Trivial things of sight and sound
Stab remembrance in the brain,
Opening up afresh Love's wound,
Quickening every pulse of pain.

VI

Hourly doth thy lover's face
Come between thy task and thee,
Shaking thy resolvéd peace
With its one eternal plea ?

VII

Hast thou never at eve's fall
Put thy work by with a sigh,
Heard a voice within thee call,
' I must go to him or die ? '

* * * *

VIII

It were wiser, wiser far
Thou and I should never meet !
Lest the flame of passion mar
Lives that both of us hold sweet.

IX

Something doth remain of bliss
Even unto sunder'd souls—
Even in the joys we miss
There's a leaven that Love controls !

x

Veil'd in clouds Love's star hath set,
Darkness covers all the shore,
Down the winds of vain regret
Wails that one word—Nevermore !

WITHERED HOPES

LAST night my heart was as a fading Rose,
Which in an Urn of Tears I did dispose.
Dawn stoop'd to raise the Rose's drooping head,
But, like my heart, the soul o' the Rose had fled.

SHE WHOM THOU LOVEST

O HEART, my heart !
Why tost in tempest throe ?
She whom thou lovest
Cares not for thy joy,
Cares not for thy woe,
Then let her go !

O beauteous Truth !
Why is thy heart so wrung ?
She whom thou lovedst

Is false to thee and thine,
Is false to me and mine,
Then why repine ?

O kindly stars !
Why shed thy tears for her ?
Or is't but mine own blinding pain
That sees tears in thy glistening rain ?
Oh, join with me to forget !
Leave not a way for regret !
And yet—— And yet——!

REJECTED

You cast my soul to the four winds of heaven,
You hurl me, passionate, upon the sea of life—
And all that I in love have madly given
Comes back to me in strife !

LOVE IN CHAINS

I FLUNG Love down upon the dungeon floor,
Close-shackled to his fellow-prisoner Hate.
Grim warders twain I set before the door—
My Pride and Will, to guard him for his fate.

Daily I sign'd the warrant for his doom,
Yet daily that fell mandate I withdrew ;
A thousand times I vow'd him to the tomb,
A thousand times his life I would renew.
At last perplex'd, yet wishing he should feel
Some measure of the torment I endured,
To harsher usage I my heart did steel,
And for the Rogue fresh chastisement procured.
Ah, vain my hope ! Vain, too, the grinding chain,
For Love rose up and bless'd me in his pain !

THE WAND OF FATE

I

O NOT by reason can we love,
Nor yet by reason hate ;
Our lives to mystic measures move,
Touch'd by the Wand of Fate.

II

Your soul drew mine, as doth the moon
Draw after her the main ;
Yet howso oft he craves her boon,
The chiller her disdain.

III

O never nearer may I climb !
Old Ocean's faith I know—
Like his, my passion spurns at Time
In ceaseless ebb and flow.

IV

O pitiless the moon's cold fire !
And pitiless the heart
That bids me ever to aspire,
Yet bends not to my smart !

V

O not by reason can we love,
Nor yet by reason hate ;
We cannot prove, we may not move
The issues of our fate.

THROUGH THE NIGHT

ONE hope have I—one prayer both night and day—
That God will lead thee some day to my side,
And touching me upon the shoulder say,
'Take her. She is for evermore thy Bride.'

A SPIRIT HATH FLED FROM MY HEARTH

A SPIRIT hath fled from my hearth
That no cry of the soul can restore.
Tho' I wander the range of the earth,
I shall find her no more.

Ah, the days that are over and gone !
And the nights that were number'd as one !
How can I live on, Love, alone
In the light of the sun ?

For the things that did gladden me once
Now lash like the whips of the sea ;
And with them all joy I renounce,
For it speaks but of thee !

And so, down the slow-ranging years,
I abide with my pain,
Until thro' the mist of my tears
I enfold thee again.

THE VISION

SOFTLY she comes at the close of day
And stands beside my chair,
The thrush calls loudly from topmost spray,
Lightens the evening star.

So, in the dusk of that twilight land,
When those we love draw nigh,
I take once more that beloved hand,
Her lips to mine comply.

Once more for us 'neath the fading skies
A veil of blue is drawn,
Once more for us in each other's eyes
Is the gleam of a love-lit dawn.

She is gone ! she is fled ! and the shadow I chase
Will neither turn, nor hear !
Ah God ! that the loss of one loved face
Can leave the world so drear.

LOVE IS FOR EVERMORE

I HAD thought to bury my love too deep for tears
Beyond the prying gaze of the phantom years,
I had wish'd to fold the past in its hooded shroud,
But ever the spirit within me cried aloud—

O the joy that may never awaken
In the bosom by love forsaken !

I had thought to quell this aching at my heart,
In the duties of wife and mother to play my part,
But that which makes the light of the home alway
Lay buried amid the blooms on my bridal day.

O the joy that may never awaken
In the bosom by love forsaken !

I could not marry the man my heart required,
So I gave to another the heart that he desired
—My heart in a casket of lead. O God above,
Was ever a gift more wanton than loveless love !

O the joy that may never awaken
In the bosom by love forsaken !

I did not think at the time of the dual wrong,—
Any haven allures when the waters of grief run strong,—
Despite of love, I had hoped to love again :
Too late—too late, I know that that hope is vain !

O the joy that may never awaken
In the bosom by love forsaken !

His wife ! Ah me— ! And yet I am not his own !
For my heart leaps up at another's look or tone.
Nothing—oh nothing, can ever recall the past !
And the curse of that marriage vow must for ever last !

O the joy that may never awaken
In the heart of a woman by Love forsaken !

O WORLD, THY CREED

O WORLD, thy creed is cold and stark !
How little dost thou heed our weeping !
Whilst ever thro' the glimmering dark
The shadow of death is slowly creeping.

SACRED POEMS

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GUARD THY HEART!

GUARD thy heart ! as tho' thy Ladye
Shrined her costliest jewels there.
For the Queen, lest Love upbraid thee,
Keep the casket bright and fair !

Let thy glance be calm and steady,
Heart of gold,—O tried and true !
Let thy feet be ever ready,
Tho' the Master's calls be few.

Every self-will'd aim abandon'd,
Every passion won to rest,
Every trespass freely pardon'd,
Every bitter thought repress'd.

Thou mayst rend the veil asunder,
Vision The Eternal Grace !
All the mystery and wonder
Breathing, breaking from thy face.

So when age to youth succeedeth
 And God's Angel draweth nigh,
 Thou shalt bless the Hand that leadeth
 Cheerly up the starry sky.

1890.

FORGIVENESS

‘Must I forgive till seven times seven?’

‘The heart within me cried.’

As thou wouldst hope to be forgiven,

An Angel Voice replied.

My wrongs are many, my wounds are sore,

And shall mine enemy triumph more,

And scorn my captive pride?

And must I turn the smarting cheek?

And meekly make reply?

My arm is strong—my faith is weak,

And storm clouds hover nigh.

Who holds in check the eager blow

He conquers far more than his foe

And sets his courage high.

And have I but the hour withstood ?

Revenge, a welcome guest ?

And shall this second, fiercer flood

O'erwhelm my battling breast ?¹

Who rules his heart is mightier far

Than he who rules by right of war

And mightier is his quest !¹

1890.

MORNING HYMN

Now the golden morning shines

Let us each be up and doing,

And when daylight swift declines,

May it find us still pursuing !

Each hath his appointed sphere,

Hands and brain alike achieving,

Hallowing all the fleeting year

With the tribute of his weaving.

Mind and Spirit, Light and Law,

Into unknown realms extending,

From man's tireless purpose draw

Starry triumphs never-ending.

¹ Prov. xvi. 32.

Tho' the labour of thy hands
Serves but to enrich another,
God, above thee, understands
Thou art helping on some brother,

Who, of frailer mould and form,
Other purposes fulfilling,
Else had perish'd in the storm,
Laying by God's task, unwilling.

Tho' in mines thou delv'st all day,
Gloom perennial surround thee,
Every stroke emits a ray
From the spot where Duty bound thee.

Never let the heart repine,
Tho' thy toil seem unavailing—
Every labourer's work 's divine,
Hope and Love are never-failing !

A HYMN OF SLEEP

I

ANOTHER day is dying
From out the golden year,
Mists in the valley lying
Proclaim that night is near,
And little ones go home to rest
With Jesus at each lowly breast.

II

While we whose thoughts are tying
Us earthward day by day,
Now doubting, now denying
The God who is our Stay,—
How can we lightly turn to rest,
Our love for Jesus unconfess'd?

III

When in the midnight sighing
For pity of our lot,
The worldly heart relying
On hopes that comfort not,—
How happier did we seek our rest,
All sorrow hush'd on Jesu's breast!

IV

And wide o'er all our crying
His dove-like wings are spread,
While Angel looms are plying
His peace about our bed :
Like little children, wholly blest,
In Jesu's arms we sink to rest.

V

Oh, fast our days are flying !
More fleetly as they speed !
Within the Churchyard lying
The many Christ hath freed :
These have but ta'en their final rest
And are asleep on Jesu's breast.

ON DEATH

WHY shouldst thou fear the Death to come ?
Why, Mortal, shouldst thou dread the tomb ?
Thou canst not one sweet minute gain
Nor stay the Hand that stilleth pain.
Then bravely meet the silent Foe,
—If Foe He be Who ends thy woe !

For at the worst—Forgetfulness,
And at the best—Great Happiness
Will minister to thy distress,
And make the parting less and less.

YOUNG DESIRE

WHEN Young Desire first shakes his lustrous wings,
Rejoicing in the strength which manhood brings,
And, like the dragon-fly in summer's pride,
Flaunts his bright armoury from side to side,
What charm can keep his passionate heart secure?
What amulet repel the Tempter's lure?
O Love! there is no talisman like this—
The sanctity of one true woman's kiss.

ICONOCLASTS

I

THERE are those who would silence the Thrush,
And stifle his woodnotes wild;
But never for them the Evening's hush
Or the heart of a little child!

II

There are those who would ravish a flower,
The heart of a maid despoil ;
But the Spirit that lives from hour to hour
Shall it ever their souls assoil ?

III

There are those who would strangle Belief,
Profaning the mystic tryst ;
But over the swirling waters of grief
Comes the luminous face of Christ !

EASTERTIDE

I

Come wrap the crocus in his winding-sheet,
For lowly lies his head :
His wind-blown petals torn with snow and sleet,
And March, the slayer, fled.

II

Lo ! Easter comes, and with the uprisen God
A million chimes awake :
The grass springs greener from the dripping sod,
The lily scents the brake.

III

And Nature hails her cardinal high-priest
With music all her own ;
Her choirs await his chariot in the East,
And his bright service crown.

IV

Till every glade takes up the festal song,
And every rill unites—
'Glory to Him to Whom all joys belong,
Hosanna in the heights !'

LORD, TEACH US HOW TO PRAY !

I

'Mid clashing creeds and civic strife,
'Mid hosts with jealous envy rife,
'Mid all the turbulence of life,
Lord, teach us how to pray !

II

'Mid wrongs that speak from hour to hour
Of raging lust, of rampant power,
Of many a bruised and broken flower,
Lord, teach us how to pray !

III

'Mid lives whose luxury decrees
To millions bondaged hearts and knees,
'Mid wanton waste and slothful ease,
Lord, teach us how to pray !

IV

'Mid tongues that slander and defame,
That batten on a neighbour's shame,
Regardless of the lives they maim,
Lord, teach us how to pray !

V

Give us Thy Faith—the Faith of old,
Hope springing from her fount of gold,
And Charity that grows not cold,
And teach us how to pray !

VI

Be Thou our inspiration still,
Grant, Lord, submission to Thy will,
Our hearts with Thy compassion fill,
And teach us how to pray !

RENUNCIATION

No man hath gain'd soul-mastery, without
Fierce self-renunciation—and the fight,
So hardly won, so perilous near to rout,
Widens Life's whole horizon to his sight.

HYMN FOR CATHOLIC LOVE

I

LORD JESU, Son of Grace,
Thy boundless charity instil,
And hearts which here Thy love efface
With Thy compassion fill.

II

Thou madest all, dear Lord,
Sinner and Saint alike are Thine—
Trial and suffering both accord
With Thy ordain'd design.

III

Thou sentest forth Thy Son
The unregenerate to reclaim—
Never a sin-besmirchéd one
But Christ hath call'd by name.

IV

As knock'd, in dead of night,
The Hand Divine on Samuel's heart,
So doth Thy Love in mercy bright
A two-fold choice impart—

V

To enter Thy sure rest,—
That calm which comes of loving Thee,
And loving Thee, then only blest
In guileless charity,—

VI

Or graceless to depart
And journey thro' the world alone,
Missing that gladness of the heart
To true believers known.

VII

Lord Jesu, Son of Grace,
Thy Heart of Charity bestow,
That all who seek Thee, face to face,
May find Thee here below !

CHARITY

TRUE test and savour of a Christian soul,
—Sweet Charity, how seldom art thou found !
For oh, how rarely is thy gentle dole
Metered to Christian folk on Christian ground !

HYMN OF PRAISE

I

PRAISE God for this all-beauteous earth ;
Praise Him for blessings of our birth ;
Praise Him for all the joy of life
That far outweighs its grief and strife.

II

Praise Him for duties of our way,
Which lead to the diviner day ;
Praise Him for labour, bond of all,
For after toil comes evenfall.

III

Praise Him, tho' storm-clouds intervene
And blinding mists distort the scene.
His guides are oftentimes pain and woe
To that far land to which we go.

IV

Praise Him, tho' stricken in the fight,
Sore as our need, more sure our might—
The strength to conquer, or to bear,
Apportion'd is to our despair.

V

Each time we triumph over sin
We bring more near the heaven within,
Each time we yield and vanquish'd lie
The heaven without us grows less nigh.

VI

Praise Him for His indwelling Soul,
That Glory which transmutes the whole
Of those vast realms of Light and Love
Within, around us, and above.

VII

Praise Him Who of His grace hath given
A bounteous earth, a boundless heaven,
And in the Heaven of Heavens to come
Hath builded Our Eternal Home.

A MAXIM FOR EVERY DAY

Find good in all you can,
Take up your human load,
Fulfil the higher man,
And leave the rest with God !

C

There is a great deal of good in the
 world, and it is not to be found in the
 city of London, but in the country
 and in the mountains.

D

There is a great deal of good in the
 world, and it is not to be found in the
 city of London, but in the country
 and in the mountains.

A LETTER FROM THE

There is a great deal of good in the
 world, and it is not to be found in the
 city of London, but in the country
 and in the mountains.

There is a great deal of good in the
 world, and it is not to be found in the
 city of London, but in the country
 and in the mountains.

LYRICS FROM THREE DRAMAS

THE END OF THE WORLD

SPRING SONG

I

How joyous the Spring is !
How jocund the hours
When the call of the throstle
Awakens the flowers,
When the merry, mad squirrels
Their revels prolong,
And the aisles of the forest
Are ringing with song !

II

As the laughter of April
Enkindles the Spring,
As the song of the skylark
Is blithest on wing,
So stirs with new wonder
The heart of a maid,
When the first stars besprinkle
The daffodil glade.

From *David and Bathshua*.

A LULLABY

DARKNESS steals o'er hill and valley,
In the heavens one pale star shines,
Whilst the nightjar's murmurous music
Breathes the magic of the pines.
Sleep : sleep : in happy slumbers blest,
For Silence broods upon a world at rest.

From *David and Bathshua*.

BATHSHUA'S PRAYER

FATHER of Life, of light, of love,
In Whose vast arms the world endures,
Pour down Thy blessing from above—
The peace that Faith alone secures.

O let the waters flow again !
The fountain of my grief upspring ;
For all life's sands are parch'd with pain,
And desolate the heart I bring.

Remove, O Lord, the sense of guilt,
 The bitter memories amass'd !
 Thou canst give sevenfold, if Thou wilt,
 The treasure that seem'd unsurpass'd.

But of all treasures—this the most,
 O keep me first in David's heart !
 For without him my life is lost ;
 Let not his joy in me depart !

And with his love, dear God, restore
 The spirit that hath left this clay,
 Into another vessel pour
 The life, the light, that was our day !

From David and Bathshua.

THE WITCH'S RUNE

Dread not the trumpets of the wind,
 Nor evil töward from mankind.
 Follow thy lord, follow thy lord,
 For love is of life the master-chord !

From David and Bathshua.

DONNA MARINA

I

DARK her eyes as the forest pines
When the slanting sun declines,
Deeper than the ebon night
Tresses that exhale the light.

Donna Marina ! Donna Marina !

II

Like a June-enchanted rose,
Faery spells about her close ;
Tranced in moonlight at her feet
Dreams the mystic marguerite.

Donna Marina ! Donna Marina !

III

All whereon her footprints press
She doth sanctify and bless ;
Mountain daisies bow before her,
Whispering each how they adore her.

Donna Marina ! Donna Marina !

IV

Two sweet doves, divinely prest,
Flutter 'neath her broider'd vest,
Passioning their silken bars
In the panoply of Mars.

Donna Marina! Donna Marina!

V

Tremulous smiles and tender tears,
Queen of all our hopes and fears!
Captive-captain of our band,
Victory in thy little hand!

Donna Marina! Donna Marina!

From *Donna Marina*.

CHORIC ODE TO THE SUN

I

O MAJESTY of Heaven ! Whose bright dominion
Is over all the peoples of the earth,
A myriad worlds beneath each streaming pinion !

O Thou Who dost renew in us at birth
The vital spark that germinates unseen,
Lighting with torch divine each nuptial hearth,
And breathing into substances terrene
The Spirit which transmuteth our dull clay,
An effluence of Thine everlasting sheen.

The Two Eternities of Night and Day
Are in Thine hands, and in Thy holy keeping
The unnumber'd souls that now in Thee are sleeping.

II

O Thou Omniscience, Incomprehensible !
Creator Beneficent to Thee we bow.
Ruler of suns and systems inconceptible !

The girdle of the worlds about Thy brow !
For aeons upon aeons round Thy throne
The stars have circled as they circle now.

Thou Genesis of Life ! Thyself unknown,—
 What Primal Deity created *Thee* ?
 Father and Son, Dividual yet One !

Our only merit is to bend the knee.
 Truths that we here may never comprehend,
 Thou wilt interpret at the journey's end.

III

Be Thou our guide, and bright the way appears !
 Teach us to worship Thee with faith profound !
 Thou Who dost gild for us the shining years,

Plenty and peace in Thy diurnal round.
 Flame on our offering ! Light it from above !
 Accept the victims at Thine altar bound !

Gladly they speed to meet the All-Father's love,
 To know at last the Aztlan of their dreams !
 Grant, Lord, that each shall in Thy presence prove

The joy that death's brief agony redeems !
 Whilst we, who humbly wait on Thee with prayer,
 Shall feel Thy Spirit touch us unaware.

From *Donna Marina*.

WITHOUT YOUR LOVE

I

Without your love, life hath no hope for me,
For I would rather cease to be
Than be—Without your love.

II

Without your love, the day and night were one,
For daylight sickens in the sun,
And sinks—Without your love.

III

Without your love, the tender flowers must fade,
The rose in ashy bed be laid,
Scentless—Without your love.

IV

Without your love, the stars grow faint and dim,
Uneven comes the nightjar's hymn
And shrill—Without your love.

V

Without your love,—O agony of sight !
How can I blot you from the light,
And live—Without your love ?

From *Donna Marina*.

THE SONG OF THE UNDINES OR
WATER-SPIRITS

I

WE dwell in the depths of the opaline sea ;
Far older than man's must our lineage be—
Whilst the waters yet cover'd the face of the earth
The mermaidens sang of man's mystical birth.

Loo-a-lála, loo-a-lála, sing we low ;

Wind and wavelet waft us idly, to and fro.

Men live on hereafter ;

We must pass and go :

Therefore thro' our laughter

Wails the note of woe.

II

We dance on the edge of the low-rippling wave,
In the curl of its foam-crests our light limbs we lave ;
We chase the white horses far over the main,
And shepherd them back to their pastures again.

III

We sleep in the dews till the Summer night closes,
 To part the lush lids of the soft-petal'd roses ;
 But when the plumed sun shoots his arrowy beams,
 We trip o'er the meadows to bask in the streams.

IV

We float past the cresses ; we skim the wide meres—
 Not swifter in flight the rath swallow appears—
 We tumble o'er cataracts, yeasty in foam,
 To the translucent floor of our crystalline home.

V

We glide down the glaciers and snows of the
 mountain,
 To upbubble in mirth from the heart of a fountain ;
 We meet and commingle in fields of the air,
 When the rain-clouds are lower'd and the thunder-
 claps blare.

VI

We sport in the breakers ; we love the wild roar
 Of ocean retreating far down the loud shore ;

We plunge in the cascades of emerald spray
Which the prows of the fishermen cast in our way.

VII

And when the pale moonlight steals over the deep,
We dream of dead heroes long pillow'd in sleep :
Our spousals take place in that mystical hour,
When our hearts blossom forth like the rose in her
bower.

*Loo-a-lála, loo-a-lála, sing we low ;
Wind and wavelet drift us idly, to and fro.
Men live on hereafter ;
We must pass away :
Rippling tones and laughter
Are but for a day !*

From *Undine*.

KÜHLEBORN'S SONG

I

Blow, winds ! and war, ye waters !
King Kühleborn commands !
The fairest of our daughters
Now thrills at touch of hands.

II

Let him who comes to woo her
The soul of honour shrine !
Should mortal love undo her,
The Sword of Vengeance mine !

III

Who weds a water-maiden,
His love must never wane :
Twin hearts, with rapture laden—
One soul in bodies twain.

IV

Crash out, ye waves, your thunder !
Roll up the silver shore !
For, lost in Love's sweet wonder,
Undine is ours no more !

From *Undine*.

UNDINE'S SONG

I

GAY are we and without care ;
Cheerly, blithely, forth we fare ;
Laugh we from the breaking wave,
Chaunt we from the echoing cave.

II

Corals, white as ocean foam,
Guard the treasures of our home ;
Silver voices of the deep
Lull us in our tranquil sleep.

III

We who live in twilight bowers
Heed no murmur of the hours,
Pine not for new heavens, new earth—
Life was given for joy and mirth !

IV

Wizard Winter and Faery Spring
Wands of magic around us swing ;
Siren Summer and Autumn lusk
Weave their spell in the rose-lit dusk.

From *Undine*.

SONG

I

FISHERMAN, fisherman, why do you weep,
Hauling your nets 'neath the moon?
Silvery shadows steal over the deep,
And the billows are all aswoon.

II

There is that in your face, my sweet mermaid,
Which recalleth a long-lost child :
Far down in the deep is my darling laid,
Whom the glittering mere beguiled.

III

O better the waters should fold and keep
Your little one in her shroud,
Than ever your famish'd eyes should weep
A heart grown cold and proud !

IV

If, but for a moment, she might draw near—
Should I find her heart grown cold?
She would rush to my arms, my joyous dear,
And greet me as of old.

v

O vain is the love of all mortal kind !
 And vain are the tears you shed !
 Ere yon pale sickle wane, you will wish you were blind
 Or else that your child were dead.

From *Undine*.

A SONG OF SPRING

(FOR THE GUITAR)

WHAT word wakes the woodland to music and life ?
 Spring, Spring, ting-a-ling Spring,
 Ting-a-ling, ring-a-ding Spring.
 What spell sets all nature in search of a wife ?
 Spring, Spring, ting-a-ling Spring.
 Far down in a glade where the daffodils blow,
 Each spear-head uplifted, each helmet aglow,
 A thousand bright banners are tost in the breeze
 As the March wind pipes lustily thro' the loud trees—
 Spring, Spring, ting-a-ling Spring,
 Ting-a-ling, ring-a-ding Spring.

From *Undine*.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL POEMS

RECEIVED JANUARY 1908

DEAN LIDDELL

(CHRIST CHURCH)

December 1891

DEAR crown of manliness and fervid truth!

Thy gentle reign of over thirty years

Is drawing to its close, and stifled tears

Attest the sorrows of our heyday youth.

Have we no words to tell our bitter ruth?—

Silence reveals what the still heart reveres.

A living memory of our past arrears

Leaves us benumb'd—yea, dumb in very sooth.

Our grief is one with thine, dear Master-friend,

For we shall miss thee at thy wonted seat.

Tho' other minds may claim our reverence meet,

And other guides may on our steps attend,

Thy spirit will go with us to the end—

An influence breathing of a life complete.

THE FIGHT OVER THE NEWMAN STATUE IN OXFORD¹

February 1892

Is Bigotry the order of the day?
 Must we, of larger faith, submit our views
 To a minority—whose least excuse
 Is threaten'd violence to our right of way?
 And Lawlessness, a fit companion, ay,
 To Christian zeal in most un-Christlike cause
 To rob a Hero of his just applause—
 And we the heirs of such a legacy!

Shall Time reprove us for the wrong we do,
 Our narrow prejudice, our lack of pride?
 Shall these roll on thro' ages, and abide
 An earnest of our faith—our weakness too?

¹ The University, in contrast to the open-mindedness shown by a large majority of the citizens, strenuously opposed the erection of a statue to Newman in Oxford, threatening that if such a statue were erected it would assuredly be pulled down.

Lo! thro' the years the clouds are backward
driven—

One Universal Faith! one Hope! one Heaven!

DEATH OF TENNYSON

October 6, 1892

MOURN, all ye Nations, mourn! for he is dead—

The sweetest singer of our later choir,

Whose thoughts were borne aloft on wings of fire,
And Truth and Beauty left us in their stead.

The last of all our prophets now is fled:

Fled is the music of his magic lyre,

The melody of half a world's desire—

A gift of song for ever garneréd.

Sunrise and sunset shall go fleeting by,

And all the voice of Nature now be mute,

Since he who loved them leaves us but his lute,
With none the master of its minstrelsy.

Yet, in his life and death, what joy have we

Who knew the tree, and gather'd of its fruit!

TO A VICTORIAN KNIGHT

Ah, not for Quest of Grail nor trophied shield,
 Nor chivalrous faith in knightly service seal'd,
 For which our pure and princely Arthur gave
 That badge of Honour—Knighthood—to the brave.

No, nor like those great rovers of the main
 Who curb'd and crush'd the mighty fleets of Spain,
 And from a Virgin Queen received the meed
 Of valorous service or of derring deed.

Peace hath her captains, resolute as those
 Who gird to battle with their country's foes,—
 Victoria first the Sword of Honour drew
 To appraise their worth who shape the world anew.

THE ABBEY OF ST MARY,¹ IN FURNESS

SEVEN Henries sought thee thro' four hundred years,
 But thou for love return'dst a vestal's vow :
 The Eighth first woo'd with calm and saintly brow,
 And then profaned thee 'mid thy suppliant tears !

¹ Built during the reign of Henry I., and destroyed by Henry VIII., the so-called "Defender of the Faith !"

PEACE

Thou gentle Dove! wing'd envoy to mankind
 Of that fair morn when war shall cease to be,
 Yet ever to thine Ark compell'd to flee,
 For nowhere can thy feet a foothold find.
 The air thou cleavest is with sulphur blind,
 While horrent shapes scud o'er the foamy sea,
 Which bristles with a monster progeny:
 The clash of arms is borne upon the wind.

O when wilt thou return to tell of fields
 Ripening with plenty, whilst the smiling lands
 Are bound by fellowship of hearts and hands?—
 No more the sword its bloody sceptre wields!
 Come to us from the realms where Heaven expands,
 And bring the leaf the tender olive yields!

1900.

ENGLAND AND THE S. A. REPUBLICS

Be just and generous ! Fear not Thou
 That Kindness may be vain—
 Tho' Winter frown from bough to bough,
 The April buds remain.

January 1901.

VICTORIA

(LINES WRITTEN ON LEARNING THAT THE QUEEN'S
 CONDITION WAS HOPELESS)

HER reign : the greatest that this realm hath seen,
 Whether we count by years or by achievement.
 Her loss : shall we not keep it meetly green
 With tears of sad bereavement?

God gave, of his fair gifts to this fair Isle,
 A virgin Queen, proud and invincible,
 And for her guide—a Prince, to reconcile
 Her heart to Queenly Rule.

Of their pure love—a noble progeny,
 O Sovereign Monarch, blest all Queens above !
 Three generations on that royal knee
 Have claim'd a Mother's love.

And if, too early in her life was known,
 The Sorrow that alone makes desolate,
 She stood as one whom ages shall enthrone
 As ruler of her fate.

To God she bow'd : and from His Hand she took
 The grievous chastisement of later years.
 Her faith in His Great Purpose never shook
 'Mid shattering hopes and fears.

And now she waits the Angel of His Peace
 With happy eyes turn'd toward a happier morn.
 Oh, never Soul long'd more for its release
 Than hers, so bravely borne !

January 22, 1901.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE BOER
REPUBLICS

WHILST we debate upon their overthrow,
We would do well to weigh that fateful hour
When the Arch-Raider,¹ covetous of power,
Struck, for self-gain, the first insensate blow.
To that fell act a thousand ills we owe,
Suspicion of our purpose, deadly stour
Of hate, revenge—a sweet and deathless dower.
Our Justice lagg'd, England's good faith lay low !

What tho' corruption lurk'd within the State,
What tho' the Boer Executive delay'd,
Time would have brought some less disastrous aid ;
For Right must triumph, tho' the Wrong be great.
Then England, O my Country, fear no fall,
But do thou justice first and last of all !

¹ Cecil Rhodes.

TO CHAMBERLAIN

"OUR CHIEF OF MEN"

THOU Warwick of our age ! whose puissant arm
Can make or unmake Empires ; whose starr'd shield
Can turn the fortune of the doubtful field
From dolorous gloom to Victory's heighten'd charm.
Thrice from disruption and from deadly harm
Thou hast deliver'd ! knowing when to wield
The sword, and when—far harder task !—to yield
To fierce entreaty or to faction warm.

In thee the Irish rebels met their foil ;
Not thee the wily Dopper might outface ;
The German found thee native of the soil,
And his "swill'd insolence" to rage gave place.
And now, when most seek ease from strife and toil,
Thou standest forth the champion of our race.

1903.

ENGLAND, QUEEN OF THE SEAS

I

Will you take them into partnership

These men of your race and thew,

Who have never let occasion slip

To do what a Briton should do ?

Who venerate your mighty name,

England, Queen of the Seas !

And greet, as brothers dear to fame,

The children of your knees.

II

Will you take them into partnership ?

Fall back on a fresher strain ?

For the project is one that will soon outstrip

The dream of the parent brain !

Who venerate, &c.

III

Will you take them into partnership,

These sons who have learnt your trade ?

O never misdoubt their grit and grip
 Who have render'd you timely aid !
Who venerate, &c.

IV

Will you take them into partnership?
 Have you thought what refusal may mean,
 When we pass the cup from lip to lip
 With a glint of steel between ?
Who venerate, &c.

V

Will you take them into partnership?
 Your Imperial task fulfil ?
 Thank God for the hand of good fellowship,
 And grasp it with right goodwill !
*Who venerate your mighty name,
 England, Queen of the seas !
 And greet, as brothers dear to fame,
 The children of your knees.*

SONS OF THE EMPIRE

I

DEAR Motherland ! Dear Motherland ! Home of the
brave and free !

Above the roar of ocean comes thy children's cry to thee
For one united Empire—one flag, one law, one crown,
One Commonwealth on which the sun shall nevermore
go down.

*Sons of the Empire ! far and wide,
Danger has found us side by side ;
And side by side shall our foemen find us
When the bugles of Britain blow shrill behind us !*

II

In England's hour of danger, the only friends she knew
Were those of her own blood and bone, of her own
pith and thew ;

In England's hour of danger, the only friends she'll need
Are the men of her own kith and kin, of her own
Viking breed.

Sons of the Empire ! &c.

III

Behold her erstwhile enemies—the friends of all her
friends !

For nothing like success succeeds when the fighting
fury ends.

They learnt to know the length and reach of England's
mighty arm ;

And the foreign sneers were exchanged for cheers,
and hate for the will to charm !

Sons of the Empire ! &c.

IV

Free-trade for all is a maxim sound—Free-trade for all
the world,

With never a hostile tariff raised, nor a hostile flag
unfurl'd ;

But until that golden day shall dawn in the generous
years to come,

FREE-TRADE WITHIN THE EMPIRE ! and widen the
bounds of home.

Sons of the Empire ! far and wide,

Danger has found us side by side ;

And side by side shall our foemen find us

When the bugles of Britain blow shrill behind us !

TILL THE DAY BE DONE

I

FROM your island sloth awake you !
 Foes engird who fain would break you !
 Britons, up ! and guard your own
 Ere your heritage be flown.
 What your fathers' valour won,
 Hold it till the day be done !
 For your sons and for your daughters,
 For your kin across the waters.

*Who'd be a little Englander,
 Whom English loins have bred ?
 Who'd be a little Englander,
 And shame our mighty dead ?
 Then for St George and England raise
 The war-cry of our sires !
 Let tor and headland flash the blaze
 Of Britain's sea-flung fires !*

II

Commerce recks not of her slaughter,
 Neither gives nor craveth quarter,

Like the never-sated sea
 She devours eternally !
 Mark the products of our soil,
 Fast displaced by foreign toil !
 Mark the labour for our hands,
 Driven to plenish foreign lands !

Who'd be a little Englander ? &c.

III

What our rivals know to-day,
 Britain taught them first the way.
 What our rivals know to-morrow,
 Britain will be last to borrow !
 Knowledge none may ever spurn,
 For the wise have most to learn.
 We must keep an open mind
 Would we learn of all menkind.

Who'd be a little Englander ? &c.

IV

Give us leave to meet our foes
 With the weapons that they chose,
 Britons ! we can hold our own,
 Fortune smile, or Fortune frown.

Not on laurels of the past
 Stands our Empire firm and fast ;
 But on each true son's endeavour,
 Striving toward the Great Forever !

Who'd be a little Englander,

Whom English loins have bred ?

Who'd be a little Englander,

And shame our mighty dead ?

Then for St George and England raise

The war-cry of our sires !

Let tor and headland flash the blaze

Of Britain's sea-flung fires !

BACK TO THE LAND !

I

ACRES out of cultivation !

British homesteads bleak and bare !

Hear the cry of desolation !

Hark the wail of blank despair !

II

Britain's navies once defeated

Then the land were all in all !

And her granaries depleted

Would precipitate her fall.

III

Where is now the yeoman spirit?
 Where the manhood of our sires?
 Where the race that should inherit
 Some of their ancestral fires?

IV

Sunk within our crowded cities,
 With their phthisis-laden streets,
 Dregs of men! whom no one pities,
 Suckled at a drunkard's teats.

V

Back then to the land, my brothers!
 Let it glow in tilth and ear!
 To the land beyond all others
 Every British heart holds dear.

VI

Up then! share your brothers' burden,
 Drive the alien from your door!
 Let not others reap the guerdon
 That your fathers won of yore.

VII

Strong in her true sons' affection,
 Greater Britain shall arise—
 Powerful in her free election,
 Peace in her Imperial eyes.

THE JACK O' THE UNION

I

TALK not of our fathers' fears !
 England alters with the years—
 We must now adapt our creed
 To this older England's need.

*Bath'd in the blood of her sons, in the blue of her seas,
 Break out the Jack ! let it boom to the buffeting breeze !*

II

All the battles of the past
 Are as nothing to this last.
 The arbitrament of Sense
 —Not of swords—our sure defence !

Bath'd in the blood of her sons, &c.

III

Voices from across the foam
 Chant the Commonwealth to come.
 Strikes afar the appointed hour,
 Love shall conquer, hate devour

Bath'd in the blood of her sons, &c.

IV

'Neath the burning Afric sun
 Did our kinsmen Duty shun?
 Were we left to fight alone
 Thro' the battle's fiercest zone?

Bath'd in the blood of her sons, &c.

V

Fashion'd upon fields of blood,
 Soldiers of one King we stood.
 With a clearer purpose now
 To the mart, and to the plough!

Bath'd in the blood of her sons, &c.

VI

Where the Flag of Britain waves
 Over widely-scatter'd graves,
 Spring the flowers, all flowers above—
 Truth and Justice, Peace and Love.

*Bath'd in the blood of her sons, in the blue of her seas,
 Break out the Jack! let it boom to the buffeting breeze!*

THE GOD OF IGNORANCE

MEXITLI¹ more regarded human life !

Our streets are altars, where we immolate
Thousands of victims yearly by a fate
More slow and painful than the Aztec knife.
This pestilential scourge ! this termless strife
'Twixt light and darkness, fair and foul estate !
Oh, why the phthisic death accelerate ?
Why ?—with the arrowy doom so swift, so rife !

Must then our God of Ignorance be fed ?—
Our best-belov'd led out before our eyes
To grace this most inhuman sacrifice,
And swell the toll of the unnumber'd dead !
When will the Law in ample might arise,
And banish from our Land this woful dread ?

¹ The ancient War God of the Mexicans, on whose altars two thousand lives are said to have been annually sacrificed. The yearly death-roll from Consumption in Great Britain alone is computed at 60,000 lives—the disease being largely conveyed by wanton expectoration !

HYMN OF EMPIRE

I

BRITONS! salute the rising sun,
 The murky clouds of night are riven,
 While thro' the Eastern gate the dawn
 O'erflows the saffron fields of heaven.

II

High as that great imperial orb
 The passion of our lives is set—
 To further Peace, and to absorb
 The Light whose beams scarce reach us yet.

III

The Light that quickens to the free;
 That hurleth Ignorance afar!
 Whose sister-soul is Liberty,
 Whilst Truth and Love her handmaids are.

IV

The Light that in a Briton's breast,
 Once kindled, glows with steadfast fire;
 That will not let his spirit rest
 Till Justice all men's hearts inspire.

V

The Light that led him forth to fare
 Thro' unknown wilds and untrod ways,
 That speeds his footsteps everywhere
 Till the fulfilment of his days.

VI

That gave him kingdoms for his own
 And all the highways of the deep ;
 In temperate or in torrid zone
 That ancient Power its watch doth keep.

VII

These realms were given to him in trust,
 To hold for men of every land.
 He knows his Empire is but dust,
 And so he takes it from God's hand—

VIII

Till the fulfilling of the Law,
 Till Truth prevail and Valour save,
 Until the Light shall overawe
 And bind the Darkness in its cave.

IX

Sons of the Free ! salute the Dawn,
Salute the flag to Faith unfurl'd ;
For England's sword was never drawn
Save for the Freedom of the World !

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

THE TEMPLE OF ART

THE Temple of Art lies open evermore,
And this the inscription set above the door—

*Faint not, nor falter, ye that enter here,
The deathless dead surround you everywhere.
All that life gives, they gave—in sacrifice,
The Deity demands no lesser price.*

In blood-red letters the brief legend runs :
And one man enters in a thousand suns !

TO WINIFRED

(AGED EIGHTEEN MONTHS)

THE Angels alone might tell you
The Land whence my Lady came,
Of the days she took to travel
Over a sea aflame.

She came with the early Dawn
Before the stars were set,
The palest of roseate streamers
Aglow on her coverlet.

But how shall I tell of the wonder,
The joy that has come to me,
In the light of the bluest of eyes
That ever smiled out of the sea?

Such treasure of golden floss,
In strands of drifting ore !
'Twas spun by a faery hand
By the light of faery lore.

Her smile is a flash of the dawn
Before the morning breaks :
'Twould scatter the dullest clouds
That ever the East awakes !

Such tiny hands and feet !
Such mimicking words and ways !
And—oh, for that childish prattle,
When the heart, itself, betrays !

For to thee, thou little Innocent !
The world cannot help but be kind.
But the larger the heart, the greater
The sorrow it needs must find !

TO HELEN

(Obit December 3, 1903)

LILIES for her virgin breast,
Where sweet peace shall ever rest ;
Violets to recall her eyes,
Opening now in paradise.

A WOMAN'S FALL

SHE sinn'd—because her very soul took fire :
And she, who most should move our tears to flood,
As having lost the crown of womanhood,
Is thrown upon the streets, besprent with mire !

HER WORST ACCUSERS

POOR maiméd soul, what refuge hast thou here,
Whom man's fierce passions still pursue and vex ?
Yet bitterest portion of thy lot—to bear
The uncompromising scorn of thine own sex !

LITTLE WAIFS OF SIN

THEIR birthright—sin and sorrow from the first,
Victims of man's insatiable desire !
Branded with infamy, tho' pure as fire !
In paynim lands ye were not so accurst !

TIME TO YOUTH

AH, fold her fast in thy victorious arms,
 Thy thirst for Beauty now or never slake !
 Too soon the baleful morn when thou wilt wake
 To find some diminution of her charms !

THE TRAGEDY OF BEAUTY

Is there to womanhood a woe so deep,
 A moment that so ruthlessly congeals,
 As that when, rising from soft-lidded sleep,
 She first perceives that Time upon her steals ?

THE *NEW WOMAN*

VULGARITY, nor more nor less,
 The modern maid entices—
 At first she did but ape man's dress,
 She now affects his vices !

THE ARMOUR OF THE ROSE

THE gorse by her parent, the golden broom,
Was taught to grow spikelets to guard her bloom,
So woman, for beauty and grace design'd,
—To ward off the cattle miscall'd menkind.

AMBITION AND ATTAINMENT

EACH man would wish to be his own good-master
—Freedom the distant goal to which he strains.
Sad that such strenuous toil should court disaster,
Since happiest he who all too late attains!

THE VISION AND THE QUEST

A WILL-O-THE-WISP that ever evades the sight,
The nearer we get, the blacker grows the night,
And he who would grasp it, grasps but a reedy light,
Whilst over his sinking shadow it dances bright!

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